



# ORPHEUS

*And Other Poems*

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WILLIS HALL VITTUM



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# ORPHEUS

AND OTHER POEMS

BY

WILLIS HALL VITTUM

*"But let some portion of ethereal dew  
Fall on my head, and presently unmew  
My soul; that I may dare, in wayfaring,  
To stammer where old Chaucer used to sing."*



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## TO MY WIFE

This wreath of halting rhyme, dear heart,  
Is my poor offering  
Before thy quiet shrine, whose part  
Throughout my wayfaring  
In winter's cold, in summer's blight,  
O'er field and flood and fell,  
Hath been that of a pilot light  
To lands where all is well.  
But though the garland withered be,  
Thy love shall make it sweet.  
'Tis all I have. Despairingly  
I lay it at thy feet.



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ORPHEUS AND OTHER POEMS



## ORPHEUS

### Part I

Calliope, chief muse of all the nine,  
With bowed head and with bated breath I ask  
Thine aid and guidance: help me line by line  
Lest that I fail in my appointed task.  
Unworthy, I, to touch thy garment's hem,  
Yet now, before my song is even begun,  
Thee I implore for many a verbal gem  
To decorate this story of thy son.  
Oh, crush not out the tiny spark of flame  
Which, though presumptuous, yet is full of fear  
And longing to extol thy gracious name,  
And that of thy great son, in accents clear.

### I

Aeons ago, mid dim and fragrant groves,  
In farthest Thrace, when all the ambient air  
Was vital with the springtime, and the loves  
Of bird and beast were throbbing everywhere,  
Fairest Calliope was wandering  
Seeking that purple flower, the namesake dear  
Of sweetest Iris, whom the poets sing  
As goddess of the rainbow high and clear.

Charmed by the sights and odors as she strayed,  
Forgetful of her godhead on that day,  
She seemed a gentle, simple woodland maid  
Tempting her sister Nymphs to come and play.  
Upon her rounded arm a basket green  
Of wreathèd willow hung, and, as she moved,  
She was the fairest maiden, well I ween,  
Ever by gods or heroes to be loved.

So straying on she presently was 'ware  
Of fluttering wings and cooings soft and clear,  
When lo! about her all the crystal air  
Was filled with gleaming doves both far and near.  
These were the doves, although she knew it not,  
Of Venus, who had flown from Paphos far,  
In that fair Cyprian isle without a blot,  
Where their great mistress is the guiding star.  
Enchanted at the airy dalliance sweet,  
She felt a sudden soft desire oppress  
Her swelling breast, so moved on footsteps fleet  
These lovely birds to fondle and caress.  
But like the marshy ignis fatuus,  
The wary doves evaded near approach,  
And as the waters of King Tantalus,  
Kept just beyond her tender yearning touch.  
Still striving to accomplish her desire,  
She followed where through wide dim aisles they  
    sped,  
Pausing at last, to wonder, and admire  
The secret refuge to which they had fled.

For here the trees had ranged themselves around  
A space no bigger than a little room,  
Where the bright sunshine, which its way had  
    found  
Among the leaves, was dulled to golden gloom.  
The walls around this lovely sylvan place



Were wainscoted with rare and lacy ferns,  
Such as among our modern city race  
Are reared most tenderly in marble urns.  
And round about, above the ferny wall,  
Between the whispering trees, were interlaced  
Sweet shrubs and slender flowering bushes tall:  
And chiefly that Syringa which is traced  
To the wild grief of Pan, who when he lost  
The lovely Syrinx, fashioned blossoms rare,  
So formed that when by gentle zephyrs tossed,  
Delicious odors fill the grateful air.  
And as the flowering branches intertwine,  
Creeping among them comes the ivy green,  
Emblem of joy, great Bacchus' sacred vine,  
Binding the whole to form a living screen.  
The only entrance to this vernal bower  
Was garlanded with drooping trumpet vine,  
Where brown bees hummed e'en at the noon-tide  
hour,

Rifling the blossoms of their dewy wine.  
The emerald floor was sparkling with the eyes  
Of early flowers, children of youthful spring,  
Narcissi fair recalled their parent's sighs,  
And hapless Echo's aimless answering.  
The starry trefoil and the violet,  
The crocus striving first of all to be,  
The blood root with its dewy gems beset,  
And faintly blushing, pure anemone.  
Midmost of all arose a rounded bank  
Cushioned with springy mosses crisp and deep,  
Exhaling odors cool and fresh and dank,  
Inviting to the poppy-lidded sleep.  
Just at one side a tiny rivulet  
Bickered 'mongst osier roots and mossy stones,  
Laving the plants along its borders set,  
And babbling in most sweet and drowsy tones.  
Enshrined within this cooling restful dell,

Her heart enthralled by many a fair conceit,  
The pensive maiden yields to Fancy's spell  
Drawing her down where sleep and waking meet.  
Low humming of the gauzy-wingèd bees,  
The ring-doves crooning in the tree tops there,  
The babbling brook, the odors,—all of these  
Combine her drowsy senses to ensnare.  
Scarce knowing what she did, the dreamy maid  
Laid her fair limbs along the mossy bank,  
And like a closing flower, unafraid,  
Through pleasant dreams to deepest Lethe sank.  
As chance decreed, sweeping through upper air,  
Apollo, lighting in that self-same wood,  
Espied the beauties of the bower fair,  
And soon within the flowery entrance stood.  
Enraptured at the sight, and scarcely deeming  
The vision true, so quietly she slept,  
He stood adoring, till from out her dreaming  
A sudden smile over her features swept.  
Then a sweet madness seized him and he flew  
Across the bower, and on her lips he pressed  
His own, and tasted purest honey dew,  
And felt the swelling of that silver breast.  
Swept into ecstasy from deepest sleep.  
'Twas thus Apollo won her, so 'tis said:  
There amid Nature's charms so pure and deep,  
That mossy bank became her bridal bed.

Sweet infant bard, first poet of the world,  
Such was the mating from which thou didst spring.  
Within thy tiny body lies upfurled  
That fire by which e'en latest poets sing.  
The story of thy life, so full of pain,  
Sad disappointment down to bitter tears,  
Thy brief delight soon, soon, to flee again,  
Has torn true hearts these many thousand years.  
Thy bright lyre shining in the highest heavens,

Sole relic of a life so sad and sweet,  
Recalls our own scant happiness that leavens  
The bitter bread of failure and defeat.

## II

Unconscious babe, around thy happy head,  
Fanning the air with gauzy pinions bright,  
Sweet dreams and airy phantasies are led  
To fill thy dawning senses with delight.  
While the great muse, thy mother, hovers still  
In deep solicitude above thy bower,  
Within thy very being to instil  
The love of poesy and music's power.  
And from Olympian heights of majesty  
Thy father fondly smiles upon his own,  
And promises both gods and men shall see  
Apollo's lyre descending to his son.  
Gifted in all above our mortal measure  
As there thou liest under Rhodope,  
Great Pan himself bestows on thee the treasure  
Of wondrous skill in woodland minstrelsy.  
For, in the years to come, he can foretell  
How closely interknit thy fate shall be  
With that of one whom now he loveth well—  
His own most favored Nymph, Eurydice.

And now the ceaseless flight of passing years  
Has brought the babe to life's gay morning time:  
Midst childish joys, too young as yet for tears,  
Even now he sweeps the lyre with touch sublime.  
O happy child in these thine hours of bliss,  
Thine only teachers Nymphs and Naiads bright,  
Who teach thee all that sweet and lovely is,  
Obedience to the gods, and music's might.

Too soon, alas! the childish days are o'er,  
And we behold him here a stripling grown.  
All men his living harmonies adore.  
He cometh now at last into his own.  
The sweet compulsion of his wistful strain  
The savage lion to his feet has drawn:  
Thrilled into gentleness by music's pain,  
The leopard dwells beside the timid fawn.  
Each bird and beast becomes his willing thrall,  
Hovering and playing round him as he goes,  
Nor tear themselves from the sweet yearning call  
Which ever from that charmed lyre flows.  
The shivering heartstrings throb and thrill again  
In unison with throbbing of the lyre,  
And quiver with a rhythmic, pulsing pain,  
Swooning in billows of celestial fire.  
The sobbing cry of souls in deepest anguish,  
The dark despair of hope forever gone,  
Piteous appeals from tortured hearts that languish  
In dungeons quarried in the living stone:  
The plaintive call of desolating sadness.  
The wistful following of hope deferred,  
The triumph and the joy of youthful gladness.—  
All these within those magic tones are heard.

Now comes the time when Fancy's specious smile  
Besets young hearts with visions of delight,  
Seeking adventurous spirits to beguile  
To distant lands searching for fortune bright.  
Yielding at length to this imperious call,  
With his companions, heroes of old Greece,  
He sails for unknown lands, whate'er befall,  
Seeking far Colchis and the Golden Fleece.  
Upon a lovely morn of early spring  
This band of heroes sailed from Iolchos forth,  
With spirits dancing and with hope a-wing,  
Eager to see the unknown parts of earth.

Bright Phoebus painted all the ocean o'er  
With sparkling rainbows of brisk dashing spray:  
While gently blowing horns of Tritons bore  
Good omen to the voyagers on their way.  
Down in the crystal depths were clearly seen  
The daughters of Oceanus at play,  
Fair maidens in their coronals of green,  
More lovely than the flowers of early May.  
And out upon the curling ridgy crests,  
Floating among the dolphins sporting there,  
Sweet Panope in all her beauty rests  
Combing the glorious sunlight of her hair.  
For many days over the blue Aegean  
The good ship followed on the ebb and flow,  
While the young heroes sang a grateful paean  
To Aeolus, whose favoring breezes blow.  
After long weeks upon that summer sea  
The ship approaches sunny Lesbos' shore,  
Where such a welcome waits them as shall be  
Granted to travelers on earth no more.  
Here too, alas! end of thy stricken years,  
Down drifting through the pitying seas shall come  
Thy tortured visage, 'mid ambrosial tears  
Of Nymph and Nereid to its final home.

The marvel-breathing legends of the journey  
By the great poets have been sung of old,  
More wondrous far than knightly joust or tourney,  
Or kingly meetings on the cloth of gold.  
Well was it for each primal Argonaut  
That the young Orpheus was of the crew,  
For many were the miracles he wrought  
With his sweet lyre as o'er the foam they flew.  
When the fair Sirens' wistful voices called  
Drawing the very hearts and souls of men  
To their destruction, there to be enthralled,

And never come among their kind again,  
Then Orpheus by the magic of his lyre  
Wrested those hesitating hearts away  
From the accomplishment of their desire  
To seek the fair forms on the ledges gray.  
He sang a strain so weirdly wild and sweet  
That even the Sirens listened with delight,  
Forgetting, in the music's rhythmic beat,  
Their fate approaching black as darkest night.  
And later, on the tossing restless seas,  
When dire disaster threatened ship and crew,  
His music softened the Symplegades  
To ope their stony jaws and let them through.  
Even in Colchis, at their journey's end,  
The silver lyre controlled the mad caprice  
Of the grim dragon stationed to defend  
From all intruders the famed Golden Fleece.

Triumphant now, they're on their homeward course,  
Each one assured of an immortal name:  
Renowned throughout the world for manly force,  
Made mightier still by dire Medea's fame.

### III

And so they came to their own land again,  
And separated, each one to his own.  
Sweet Orpheus, with spirits pleased amain,  
Quickly to Thracia's flowery meads has flown.  
Charming and thrilling all, as long before,  
Again he wanders throughout grove and vale,  
Where the glad memory of days of yore  
Comes with each fragrant wind blown down the  
dale.

Then on a day it happened, as he played  
For Nymphs and Dryads gathered round to share

The flowing strains, there came a lovely maid  
As sweet and simple as the flowers are.  
And as she came within the music's sound,  
The maiden paled and faltered and stood still:  
Her heart, drawn from her breast without a wound,  
Yearns to those tones that bless yet seem to kill.  
Enchanted, frozen into marble pale,  
With wistful eyes seeking the reason why  
Entrancing music makes her spirit quail—  
She stood, the image of pure poetry.

What of the bard whose magic tones have wrought  
Such strange enchantment for this lady fair,  
Whose brow, as crystal clear, shows every thought  
As pure and innocent as mountain air?  
Only one look he gave her when she came,  
But with that look he 'gan the maid adore;  
Struck through and through by Eros' dart of flame,  
He wavered in her worship nevermore.  
For in that moment when his blissful eyes  
Beheld Eurydice so pure and fair,  
Love swept his soul away, and sweet surmise,  
And doubt, and hope were left contending there.  
And every airy phantasy and dream  
That bright Euphrosyne brings in her train,  
And every charming sprite of field or stream  
Brought lovely visions to his wildered brain.  
Till in an ecstasy of wild desire  
His fingers o'er the golden strings he swept,  
Waking the spirit of that living lyre  
Where midst her tenderest harmonies she slept.  
Then liquid notes down dropping from on high  
With sweetest music filled the listening plain,  
As when, from out the splendors of the sky  
Some shattered rainbow falls in iridescent rain.  
The golden strings, swept by celestial fire,  
Covered the gamut of our weal and woe;

Joy, grief, and happiness; the bard's own sire  
Could never bid more tuneful numbers flow.  
And in, and out, and through the music's maze,  
Now here, now there, flitting on fittful wing,  
Recurring ever, comes the maiden's praise.  
'Tis love, triumphant love, that strikes the string!  
What maid such wooing sweet could long with-  
stand?

Soon to enraptured Orpheus she confessed  
Her growing love, and that confession spanned  
The gulf twixt dire despair and visions blest.

All secrecy was laid aside at last,  
And the blue heavens smiled upon their love.  
Great Pan gave them fair greeting as he passed,  
And Nymph and Naiad with each other strove  
Who should bring fairest flowers and garlands gay,  
And dance about them in the happy fields  
Where, as young lovers should in month of May,  
He sues for kisses, she, denying, yields.  
So for a time their blissful life ran smooth,  
All graces and perfections thither came,  
Basking within their hapiness as doth  
A horde of moths about a torch's flame.  
And every Nymph within the laughing mead,  
And every Naiad of the crystal spring,  
And Satyrs piping on the slender reed,  
And every warbling bird on gleaming wing,  
And Zephyr of the cooling restful breeze,  
And airy sprites in lilies' cups who dwell,  
All gather, playing 'neath the whispering trees,  
Drawn by the magic of their love's sweet spell.  
And with them came the train of Fancy bright,  
Splendors and dreams and sweet imaginings,  
And sighing breaths of amorous delight,  
And steadfast Harmony, from Joy that springs;  
These hovering about the happy pair,



Nestle within each clinging golden tress,  
And twine like tendrils round that lady fair,  
Whom by their presence they enchant and bless.

#### IV

But on a fatal and accursèd day,  
As sweet Eurydice was wandering  
Through the tall grass, upon her sunny way,  
She felt the spiteful adder's lethal sting.  
No time to bid her loving lord farewell,  
But swept at once along the downward path  
That leads to Pluto's regions, that dread hell  
Where all are gathered after earthly death.  
Her moaning cries unanswered must remain,  
For Orpheus has crossed full many a hill,  
Soothing and shielding other hearts from pain  
Which, soon, Oh soon, his stricken breast shall fill.  
Then was her absence known, and now the wood  
Reechoes to the wild despairing cries  
Of Nymph and Naiad and each spirit good  
Searching her path with wide fear-stricken eyes.  
And when upon the fatal spot they strayed  
Where the dull adder's loathly coil was spread,  
One drop of that dear blood upon a blade  
Of shrinking grass, betrayed the deed of dread.  
O cursèd beast, forever doomed to crawl  
Upon thy belly through the mud and slime,  
Forever shall man's wrath upon thee fall,  
Loathing shall follow thee to end of time.

Who shall describe the wild drear loneliness  
Of Orpheus as he strays among the hills  
Thinking upon each loving kind caress  
Of the dear Nymph whose loss his spirit kills?  
No softening tear is loosened from those eyes  
Wide open, straining over field and dell,

Seeking the slender graceful form that lies  
Forever graven in each crystal well.  
The spirit of his lyre distraught did go,  
Her music turned to sad complainings drear,  
Without the master's hand to guide her woe,  
Low shuddering moans alone may reach the ear.  
Sweet stricken bard, all Nature shares thy grief:  
The shivering aspen whispers soft and low,  
The willow droops each slender shining leaf  
And through the years still bears thy weight of  
    woe.

The sombre pine threw down his choicest cones  
When sighing Zephyr told the dismal tale,  
And wept balsamic tears, amid his moans,  
Whose sad funereal fragrance filled the vale.  
Each weeping lily from its silver vase  
Pours forth its treasured store of dewy wine,  
And toward the smiling sky turns not its face,  
But drooping sadly there doth still repine.  
And all the Nymphs and Naiads who erstwhile  
Had basked within the sunshine of her love,  
Remembering that pure heart so free from guile,  
Now grieved heartbrokenly as mourning dove.  
But tenderest sympathy avails not here.  
Distracted Orpheus roams the hills alone,  
Seaching the wilds without or hope or fear,  
His life one sad and dreary monotone.

At last a sudden stern resolve possessed  
His bleeding spirit, and he turned to go  
To that dim unknown land in farthest west  
Where opes the portal to the realms below.  
And as he journeyed on his dreadful way  
He called with mad intensity upon  
His mighty mother, for her aid and stay,  
And to his father on his fiery throne.  
Beseeching them in the dear name of love

To help him now in his great agony,  
To find such tones as Pluto's heart should move,  
And bend the will of stern Persephone.

Full many times the moon did wax and wane  
Before he reached the gloomy groves that stand  
Surrounding the grim portal to the pain  
And suffering of iron Pluto's land.  
Now as he entered on the dismal way,  
Strange plants surrounded him on every side;  
The deadly nightshade that doth ever slay  
All living things that near it would abide.  
And its malignant potency was shown  
By pitiful dead songsters of the air  
Thickly about the fatal bushes strewn,  
Slaughtered for tasting of those berries fair.  
And just beyond a mournful sight was seen  
Where, gasping out its final fainting breath,  
A tiny humming bird of emerald green  
Was folded in the vile and sticky sheath  
Of a strange murderous plant, whose honied leaves  
Possess the dreadful and uncanny power  
Of closing round all humming honey thieves,  
And the poor helpless victim to devour.  
And loathsome pulpous fronds of spotted plants  
Whose noisome exhalations choke the breath,  
Among whose grisly roots there ever haunts  
The viper with the forkèd tongue of death.  
And mosses like a million coffin worms  
Planted on end and writhing in the dusk,  
And cactus grim that deepest scorn affirms  
For foliage, threatens with thorn-pointed tusk,  
And hideous blotchy leaves of creeping vines  
That cumber every stately forest tree,  
Whose baleful grapes are pressed to make the wines  
Poured for their victims by the Furies three.  
Each slender graceful plant that thrills the heart  
With pleasure when in flowery meadows seen,

Has here its swollen bloated counterpart  
Distorted into ghastly livid green.

Unwittingly to this grim region come,  
The poet, heaving many a thankful sigh,  
Emerged from out that pestilential home  
Of horrors which all Nature's laws defy.  
For now those monstrous forests terminate  
And the undaunted traveler attains  
A rocky region, sad and desolate,  
Wherein the very soul of silence reigns.  
And as he presses on his unknown way,  
He sees the rugged crags now higher grown.  
The path along which without stop or stay  
He hastens breathlessly, winds ever down,  
Leading at last into a jagged cleft  
Where lightning's shock has sundered hill from hill,  
And through the space by strokes Titanic reft  
From solid rock, it plunges downward still.  
Here, close beside the narrow shelving way,  
A raging torrent's mighty force is spent,  
Covering the rocks with mists of driving spray,  
Making more hard that perilous descent.  
But with a courage born of wild despair  
He stumbles down the treacherous incline,  
Upholden, though he knows it not, even there  
By great Apollo's shielding love divine.  
At this there yawned before him black as night,  
Made terrible by snarling beasts who fought  
And tore each other in their furious might,  
The gateway to the regions that he sought.  
Not even here he faltered, but still pressed  
Into that channel through earth's bowels riven,  
For the wild longing in his stricken breast  
Was stronger than or earth or hell or heaven.  
When lo! the dismal entrance passed and won,  
He finds it but a vain deluding masque,  
For of the raging beasts the sound alone

Remained to fright him from his heavy task.  
Malicious imps come at their god's behest  
To mime and juggle in the darkness there,  
With foul intent to end his pious quest  
Now fled, their mocking laughter heard from far.  
And soon the rocky hallway makes an end:  
Then straight he enters to a strange sad land  
Whose vague faint half-light, (which no planets  
send,)

Reveals a massive arch and portal grand.  
And just within the gloomy portal's centre  
Lieth that famed three-headed beast of yore,  
Who never yet forbade poor mortal enter,  
But holds him prisoner forevermore.

This final barrier passed, dark Pluto's realm  
Now opens out before him far and wide  
Beneath dim twilight that doth ever overwhelm  
With deep despondence all who there abide.  
Vague shadowy swarms of spirits, in their pain  
Seeking that solace they may never find,  
Drift up and down the desolated plain  
Like swirling leaves before autumnal wind.  
These spirits drear ne'er had their mortal frame  
Laid piously beneath the kindly sod,  
Victims eternal of that earthly shame,  
They cower beneath the scourgings of the rod:  
For never may they cross the Stygian river  
While their dull lifeless bodies taint the air,  
Sweet peace and quiet visit them, Oh never,  
But leave them to dark desolation's care.

The poet wanders now across the plain  
To a great river's marge, whose farther shore  
Is hid in clouds and mists and driving rain  
Which cover in that landscape evermore.  
Then out of the dark whirl, amid the din  
Of swollen waters rushing through the night,

Comes that stern boatman, old and bent and thin,  
Rowing full calmly in the flood's despite.  
But when he saw a living mortal there  
Amazement filled his eyes, and then he frowned  
And motioned him away, but still would stare,  
Seeking to understand, but nothing found.  
Now must the lyre touch aged Charon's heart,  
And soon pure melody filled all the air:  
Strange weird emotions did its tones impart  
Sounding thus sweetly in the turmoil there.  
The dim and ancient boatman trembled then,  
Sighing he motioned Orpheus to draw near,  
Bidding him sing those wondrous songs again,  
Prolonging thus one joy in life so drear.  
Then straight he stretches forth his shaking hand  
And guides the poet, with expression new  
On that grim upturned face; and from the land  
They swept and drove the dreadful currents  
through.  
Beyond the mists and battling torrents whirled,  
He sees arising through the clearer air,  
The strange mysterious dreaded under-world  
Where Pluto reigns with Ceres' daughter fair.

Then from the skiff he hastened, and along  
The banks he wandered, 'neath the dreamy spell  
Which overtakes all those who roam among  
The mournful meadows of the asphodel.  
Here were those peaceful spirits living still  
The lives they followed in the upper air,  
But pale and colorless beneath the will  
That stifled passion, mirth and pleasure there.  
But ever those sad souls look longing back  
To earthly joys fled like a summer dream,  
Save only those who could endure the rack  
No longer, and had drunk of Lethe's stream.

The sunless hills are pierced by many a cell  
Burrowed within the hard and rocky soil.  
These are their homes, where they must ever dwell,  
Wrought by themselves with endless care and toil.  
Roaming among these meadows dim and drear,  
Where never change of time or season comes,  
Is for these spirits all they have of cheer  
Aside from that of their own darker homes.

Thrilling with pity for their state forlorn,  
The anxious poet must no longer stay,  
But goes where hills, to eery figures worn,  
Border forever the descending way.  
For now the path again leads steeply down  
'Neath the foundations of the solid earth,  
Midst the grim darkness, now far deeper grown,  
Removed beyond all thought of easeful mirth.  
Here, from the valleys twixt the phantom hills  
Strange stealthy monsters of most hideous mien,  
Whose ravening maw the heart with terror fills,  
Watching along the lonely path were seen.

Dragons whose eyes dart jetted streams of flame,  
And giants of the deadly serpent race,  
And that behemoth whose unwieldy frame  
Blanches with fear the boldest human face.  
Besides were elfins flying through the mirk,  
Shrieking and wailing like a soul in pain:  
None of the throng would any labor shirk  
That might send Orpheus fleeing back again.  
But none of these grim shapes had power to harm,  
Only to sight and hearing were they bold,  
So on he passed, though sooth to say, alarm  
Had pinched his face and shrunk his blood with  
cold.

## V

Anon he sees a ponderous iron gate  
 Which radiate bars full cunningly enforce,  
 Across the face of whose firm forgèd grate  
 Stand letters hammered out both rough and coarse.  
 Ages thereafter, that divinest soul  
 Whose spirit straight from that of Orpheus sprang,  
 Made the same journey through these regions foul,  
 Guided by him who of Aeneas sang.  
 He hath writ large the dimly lettered scroll  
 So rudely wrought upon this gateway drear.  
 Those words of terror through the ages roll,  
 "All hope abandon, ye who enter here."  
 The sullen gate swung gratingly ajar,  
 While Orpheus, aghast with awe and fear,  
 With sinking heart passed that forbidding bar  
 Enclosing these sad souls in torment here.  
 Then entered he a region full of pain  
 And suffering that nevermore shall cease;  
 Where sobs and moans and stifled cries in vain  
 Appeal to vacancy and empty space.

Here the dim flickering light can just reveal  
 A spacious hall through which the wild winds rave,  
 Revolving Ixion's huge wooden wheel,  
 Which heaven's will has made his living grave.  
 Driven forever in the dizzy whirl,  
 His serpent bonds, writhing in maddened fear,  
 Draw tighter still their loathsome slimy coil,  
 While hissing threats ever assail his ear.  
 Here his ungrateful treachery so vile  
 To highest Jove, he rues day after day,  
 Longing forever for the sun's bright smile  
 Across the laughing meads of Thessaly.

Near by, a vast and dimly lighted cave  
 Whence groans and piteous cries forever come,



The shuddering air repeats, wave after wave,  
Those sounds of agony amid the gloom.  
Here, sating the grim vultures' bloody thirst,  
Must suffer while the endless ages run  
That dastard giant, for his crime accurst  
'Gainst her who had Apollo for a son.

There, in a space below a toppling cliff,  
That Phrygian king stands in a mimic sea,  
Consumed with thirst, his joints with terror stiff,  
He ever cries for help that may not be.  
The laden fruit trees growing near his face  
Bend back their boughs when he would reach them  
there,  
Ever tormented by the sight of grace,  
Ever he's doomed to disappointment drear.  
Well may he rue that ghastly feast, whereto  
Was bid each high Olympian on his throne:  
His false and babbling tongue well may he rue,  
Betraying secrets that were not his own.  
And not alone he suffers, for the seed  
Of pride and arrogance that he had sown  
Within his children's breasts, has for its meed,—  
His daughter rendered childless, turned to stone.

Still further on the poet's eye doth meet  
A hill, whose sharp precipitous incline  
Is rendered glassy smooth by slipping feet  
Which for long ages labor here in vain.  
Here, while his sweating brow and panting breath  
Betray the dire exertion of his toil,  
King Sisyphus, still striving underneath  
A monstrous stone which must forever roll  
Downward again when near the summit high,  
Forever urges it with labors vast  
To mount the eminence, and quiet lie  
Upon the top, and give him rest at last.

Divine communication never told  
The crime for which this punishment was given,  
But well we may believe his spirit bold  
Was full insulting to the powers of heaven.  
So there he labors, in the Furies' grasp,  
Nor may that stone the longed-for summit win,  
Forever must he strain and pant and gasp  
To pay the penalty of deadly sin.

Deeper within this inner shrine of woe  
The trembling, heartsick, piteous poet sees,  
There, in the darkness, where the waters flow,  
The sinful souls of the Danaïdes.  
With painful toil and unremitting care  
Vast brimming jars they from the stream must lift,  
And pour them endlessly within the maw  
Of gaping cisterns in a torrent swift;  
For well they know their labors here will last  
Until these cisterns to the brim are filled;  
Nor can they see, within the darkness cast  
About them, that the end is still withheld.  
Great shards are broken from the bottom deep  
Of each huge thirsting implement of clay.  
Whence purling rivers bubble forth and sweep  
All hope of ended labor far away.

And many more within these granite walls  
Are here condemned so suffer endless woe.  
Here even the shadow of a hope ne'er falls  
Across these lives withered by tortures slow.  
Forever groans and wailings fill the air,  
Wrung from sad hearts amid their torments sore.  
'Mongst shrieks and curses foul and hopeless prayer  
These stricken souls must linger evermore.

Fainting and desperate, the poet turns  
And hastens to the grim enclosing gate.

A sudden dreadful fear within him burns  
Lest in his agony he come too late.  
But, as it were at some divine behest,  
The gate swings open grudgingly and slow,  
And safe from out that terrifying quest  
He now emerged, stunned by compassion's blow.

## VI

With footsteps faltering and heart cast down  
Again he turns into the twilight gray.  
In thought he hears those tortured spirits moan,  
Nor will those hopeless wailings pass away.  
Onward he wanders far into a vale  
Whose bordering hills are pierced with darksome  
caves,  
Where dim mysterious forms his path assail,  
But whose assaults his steadfast spirit braves.  
Here dwells that shameful and incestuous brood,  
Offspring of Death and his vile sister, Sin,  
An evil and malicious multitude,  
On pinions bat-like, tendinous and thin.  
Foul Treachery still stabbing in the back,  
And downcast Shame with her averted face,  
And Jealousy stretched ever on the rack  
Whose winch is turned by Falsehood's legioned race.  
And baleful Murder, with his bloodshot eye,  
And Lust, forever by his passions swept;  
And those twin vices creeping furtive by  
Are grasping Avarice and Greed yclept.  
And legions more of that malignant breed  
With shrieks and howlings sweep athwart his way;  
But his pure soul, proof 'gainst their utmost deed,  
Baffles them still and robs them of their prey.

So faring on to calmer regions comes  
The poet, till, mid meadows dim, he sees

A placid stream whose current never foams,  
But flows forever on in restful peace.  
And here and there along its grassy shore  
Come wandering spirits, bitten by the pain  
Of keenest memory of days of yore,  
Whose joys departed shall not come again.  
These throw themselves lengthwise upon the turf  
And drink deep draughts of the quiescent stream,  
When rolling billows of oblivion's surf  
Sweep memory away like troubled dream.  
When this he saw he would no longer stay,  
But wandered further from the river's brim;  
For Lethe's waters wash the past away,  
And memory was all the world to him.

Then as he wandered, lighter grew the air,  
And ever hurrying spirits passed him by  
Till in the distance rose a palace fair  
Whose towers and battlements reached far on high.  
Through the chief portal of these massèd piles  
Go streaming hosts of spirits sad and drear,  
For mighty Pluto in these gloomy aisles,  
With his three helpers, sits in judgment here.

And then, Oh god of love, stand by him now!  
Far in advance, amidst the press he sees  
That slender form, that golden hair whose glow  
Is dearer far than sunlight to his eyes.  
Then from his inmost heart arose a cry  
That shrilled above the rustling of the throng  
Which straightway parted, looking lovingly  
On him who was himself love's spirit strong.  
"Found, found, at last! Gods, but the time was  
long!

Thou dream and glory of this riven breast!  
Turn, turn, Oh turn, thou source of all my song,  
And bring this desolated bosom rest!"

With startled eyes brimming with love's desire,  
She turned to fly into the wished-for haven  
Of his dear arms, but Pluto's edict dire  
Prohibits freedom until judgment given.

## VII

So was she swept out of his yearning view.  
Now must he win her back, whate'er befall.  
With heart on fire and courage spurred anew  
He pressed into that mighty judgment hall.  
The sight that met his eyes on entering there  
Might well the kingliest human mind o'erwhelm.  
Gold, silver, gems, in vast profusion rare,  
All gathered from their home in Pluto's realm.  
Here was a pillar reaching to the height  
Of vaulted arches lost amid the gloom,  
One shaft of limpid, sea-green malachite,  
Like tenderest lily's bud before the bloom.  
Yonder from out the gem-encrusted wall  
A graceful archway leaps forth into space;  
Of purest jasper were the ashlar all,  
With softest hammered silver held in place.  
Looking more closely he could see that all  
The pillars glowing in their lustrous sheen  
Were each a shaft of precious mineral.  
Never the like upon the earth was seen.  
For chrysoprase was there, and amethyst,  
And lapis lazuli blue as the sea,  
And agate like entangled vines in mist,  
And jade and topaz and chalcedony.  
Upon the summit of each pillar high,  
Of beaten gold, wrought skilfully and well,  
A capital was placed on which the eye  
Could see fair-carved the mournful asphodel.  
The onyx walls were crusted thick with gems

For kingly diadem or sceptre fit.  
Amid the darkness of that hall, their gleams  
By contrast made the place more dimly lit.  
And all those sparkling walls of fairest stone  
Were carved with scenes familiar in that hell.  
Of birds or trees or flowers there was not one,  
Save only the sad lily asphodel.  
His anxious eye at last is turned to see  
Where those grim powers in sternest judgment sit,  
There mid the growing gloom it seems to be  
Only a place for deeds of darkness fit.  
The awful dais whence they all look down  
Upon the crowded spaces in their might,  
Is builded of the rarest marble stone,  
Black as the darkest hour of starless night.  
And there, before the dais is a space  
Railed off from that which anxious spirits fill,  
Where trembling mortals are compelled to face  
Their final doom, whether for good or ill.

But now a hushed expectancy pervades  
Those waiting spirits, and from out the gloom  
Comes a procession whose uncertain shades  
Most dismal 'mongst the gorgeous columns loom.  
First came those Cretan brothers, children dear  
Of fair Europa and of mighty Jove:  
In judgment robes voluminous and sheer  
Which rustle warningly as on they move.  
Then Aeacus, the keeper of the gate,  
Who with these brothers sits in judgment here;  
All three were far above all love or hate,  
Or coward weakness or untoward fear.  
And ranged about on either hand he sees  
Those grim attendants of the court of hell,—  
The Harpys and the stern Eumenides,  
Whose punishment of crime is fierce and fell.  
But still within the centre of them all

Two seats were left for the great king and queen.  
And now from far beyond the onyx wall  
The royal cortège moved upon the scene.  
Elfins and demons their great master's will  
In swiftest flight to its fruition bring;  
And hooded ghosts and imps whose duty still  
Is doing his behests on flitting wing.  
And fairest Nymphs, sent by great Jove's decree  
As fit attendants on the stolen queen,  
But veiled and silent all, as should agree  
With that grim court where pleasure hath not been.  
Now high upon the dais comes the form  
Of Pluto, his dark face serene and grand,  
But stern and sad from seeing many a storm  
Of pain and agony beneath his hand.

Then, at the last, among these Stygian bowers,  
He saw—cursed ever by the memory  
Of sunny fields and warbling birds and flowers—  
The sombre eyes of rapt Persephone.  
That flower-like face, for love's entrancement fit,  
Was shadowed by long years of nether gloom;  
That perfect mouth and lips as honey sweet,  
Were like fair roses reft of their perfume.  
And, Oh the pity of it! now he sees  
Between her eyes, across her features fair,  
Stern lines that surely bode no good to these  
Sad spirits waiting for their judgment here.  
Soon were they seated and the court began.  
Swiftly to each was meted out his fate;  
And rapidly those imps and demons ran  
Conveying mortals to their last estate.

Now doth his heart stop beating; at the bar,  
With pleading eyes, in all her purity,  
Emblazoned in his vision like a star,  
Stands she whom still he seeks, Eurydice.

No charge was made, her life was without flaw,  
Her record blameless, and she only came  
Before that bar obeying the strict law  
Which deals with good and bad in forms the same.  
With kindly eyes the listening judges smiled  
And told her she was free to go and come,  
While the great queen with gesture sweet and mild,  
Bade her among these halls to make her home.  
But with entreaty filling every tone  
She begged to be returned to Orpheus' side,  
There where among the hills he wandered lone,  
In his dear presence would she still abide.  
But grim and stern each judge's face was seen,  
The law's unchanging course must have its way,  
Each mortal who upon the earth had been  
Must in this land of spirits ever stay.  
With piteous eyes, whose voiceless pleading calls  
For help in this her dire extremity,  
She turns to Orpheus who instant falls  
Upon his knees before Persephone.  
With some vague memory of days gone by,  
She nods a kind permission to him there,  
For in his agonized beseeching eye  
She reads the presence of some unknown prayer.

Uprising then, he took the silver lyre  
And, with a prayer for his great mother's aid,  
And inspiration from his heavenly sire,  
His fingers o'er the magic strings he laid.  
Never before nor since has music's soul  
Been poured in such a rhapsody divine.  
Such tones among the vaulted arches roll  
As with the quivering heartstrings intertwine.  
The haunting sweetness of that minor strain,  
Filled with divinest heartbreak, echoes still,  
Smiting the bosom with a sudden pain  
So sharp that e'en the dryest eye must fill.



Then as he sang, within the minds of all  
Grew up fair visions of the outer world.  
Plainly as if emblazoned on a wall  
Full many a scene before them was unfurled.  
The sighing of the wind through lofty pines  
Along the autumnal barren mountain side,  
High terraced hills with purple clustered vines,  
O'erlooking valleys deep and rivers wide.  
Fantastic billowing of golden grain,  
The beauties of a flower-bespangled lea,  
The sweet refreshment of a summer rain,  
The open glory of a wind-swept sea.  
Then from the viewless spaces of the sky  
Drifts down a sheer delirium of joy;  
'Tis the blithe skylark only could supply  
Such ecstasy of happiness without alloy.  
Then arching over them come sparkling skies  
Where great Diana's lovely face is shown:  
About her every shimmering cloudlet flies,  
Sitting triumphant on her crystal throne.  
Beneath that witching light are dusky groves  
Where hidden flowers the charmed sense assail,  
And Nymphs and Dryads with their shepherd loves  
In blissful murmurs tell the world-old tale.

Now to Poseidon's realm their thoughts are turned,  
Where Lycidas, (whose dirge no man may mend,)  
Lies deep within the sapphire caves inurned,  
While round his bier the loveliest Nymphs attend.  
Far o'er the level brine the snow-white sails  
Of graceful argosy and pinnace shine;  
From sunny climes they come, with wondrous tales  
Of joyous life in lands of palm and pine.  
Changing again, their docile thoughts are led  
To tales of love and sacrifice divine:  
Again doth Ariadne spin the thread  
That shall her lover's tortuous path define.

Once more they hear Andromeda's low moan,  
Too fair a flower for that grim rocky shore,  
While flying as on wings of tempest blown,  
Comes he who'll be her lover evermore.  
Whatever tales of sacrificing love,  
Of sweetest constancy, to all most dear,  
Of honor set all riches far above,  
The old earth offereth, again they hear.  
Then followeth his own heart-broken tale  
Of love's enchantments, and the ecstasy  
Of life in many a smiling Thracian vale  
Beneath the steepy slopes of Rhodope.  
And of the sudden loss that crushed him down  
So low that even the warning hand of Fate  
Could not deter from braving Pluto's frown,  
Hoping his iron will to mitigate.  
Then in the very throes of anguished fear  
He stretched out supplicating arms to her  
Who sat with eyes inscrutable and drear,  
And poured forth his last agonizing prayer.

“Dread goddess of the shadow realm,  
Hear my heartbroken cry.  
Affliction's waters me o'erwhelm,  
Like ship am I without a helm  
In seas of misery.

Oh be thou pitiful to me  
In midst of my deep woe,  
Guide thou my pinnace through the sea,  
Preserve me, let my sorrows flee  
Before thy gracious bow.

Remember thou on Enna's plain  
Thy mother's stricken cry,  
Her sudden desolating pain,

Her tears like sad autumnal rain,  
Her hopeless agony.

If of thy love for her one trace  
Still wrings that bosom fair,  
Grant me the blessing of thy grace,  
Oh turn not from me thy sweet face  
But hearken to my prayer.

Shield me beneath thy mercy's wing,  
Thee, goddess, I implore,  
Such songs my soaring heart shall sing  
That still thy boundless praise shall ring  
Till time itself is o'er."

He ceased, and as a broken lily stands  
Drooping within the sunlight clear and pale,  
So he stood waiting, while those wizard hands  
Were powerless as the new-fledged nightingale.

But on the dais where the judges drear  
Sat erst in solemn pomp and majesty,  
Was heard the sound of stifled sobs, the tear  
Now visited those eyes of destiny.  
The cruel Harpys and Eumenides,  
Who still unmoved the keenest anguish see,  
Now joined with streaming eyes in piteous pleas  
That all the poet's prayer should granted be.  
The mortal sages earthly grief had known,  
And so wept openly, nor thought it shame,  
While on great Pluto's cheek the tears ran down  
More searing in their course than livid flame.  
That queenly head is bended low at last,  
Encircled by the fair embowèd arm,  
While choking sobs that follow thick and fast  
Attest how deep and fierce is sorrow's storm.

When the first tempest of their grief was spent  
All turned with pleading looks to Pluto there,  
Who with still swimming eyes his vision bent  
On that fair head low lying in despair.  
'Neath the compulsion of his wistful gaze  
She raised her face one moment in her pain.  
When lo, a miracle! to his amaze  
He saw the face that on bright Enna's plain  
Had swept his heart away. All trace of years  
Within his saddened land was washed away  
By sweet compassion's touch. Besprent with tears,  
She seemed a rose gemmed with morn's dewy spray.  
To the unspoken question in his eye  
A fleeting smile made answer sure and sweet.  
Then thus to him, with look serene and high,  
Who stood before the mighty judgment seat.  
"Fair son of the great Muse, I bid thee go:  
And the reward of thy true heart shall be,  
And of the music thou hast brought below,  
The maiden of thy choice, Eurydice.  
I tell thee thou mayst lead the maiden home,  
But as an evidence of faith in me,  
See that thou look not back, whatever come,  
Else must she dwell here to eternity."

Down to the red core of his surging heart  
That Thracian poet-lover trembled then  
With joy so keen that his glad eyelids smart  
With tears of thankfulness, and hope again  
Sprang vibrant in his suffocating breast.  
Among the gloomy splendors of those realms  
Forebodings dire his courage had depressed  
Until this sudden bliss him nigh o'erwhelms.  
Now from the dais comes a misty form,  
Deep cowed and silent, who with gesture brief  
Points to the sombre entrance through which swarm

The hosts of spirits in their hopeless grief.  
Uplifting then his glad triumphant face,  
The poet cast one final look around  
On glories marvelous within that place  
Where he, and he alone, had mercy found.

Forth from the presence of the court austere  
He passed, while footfalls light as thistledown  
Made sweetest music to his listening ear,  
In softest cadence following his own.  
Dire were the torments that he underwent  
Obeying Pluto's last commandment stern.  
Ever his gaze upon the ground he bent  
Lest that his hungry eyes to her should turn.  
So on they fared with minds and hearts elate,  
Past poppied Lethe, through the vale where dwell  
The vicious brood of Sin, past that dread gate,  
Down through the meadows of the asphodel.  
Now doth the Stygian torrent stop their way,  
But by decree of Pluto, the divine,  
Old Charon ferries them without delay  
To the drear plain where restless souls repine.  
Then o'er the plain and through the portal dim  
Where sleeping Cerberus ne'er openeth eye;  
And into that dark corridor and grim  
Where dwell those imps of aptest mimicry.  
Now, in the latest stages of his way,  
With hope and joy the poet's heart beats high.  
Soon needs no longer Pluto's hest obey,  
For in another hour they're 'neath the sky.  
Then in the accents of that honied voice  
There shrilled a loud exceeding bitter cry  
For instant help. Those vicious imps rejoice  
To see that Orpheus turns back suddenly.  
Alas! the wretched poet only sees  
Eurydice swept wailing from his view.  
Cold terror doth his very bosom freeze,

And while he lives his weakness doth he rue.  
Then as the giant pine on Ida's slopes  
Amid the blinding crash of bolt from heaven  
Reels to its fall, so mid his shattered hopes  
Falls Orpheus, by stroke of fortune riven.

As o'er his whirling brain oblivion crept,  
And active thought and consciousness expire,  
His straying nerveless fingers overswept  
The face of his forgotten silver lyre.  
The tortured writhing of the golden strings  
Sobbed out a cry of agonized despair  
Such as a desolating sorrow brings  
When hope is crushed by long unanswered prayer.

Now breaks that loving heart. Oh nevermore  
Shall joy or gladness visit that sad breast.  
Never those lips shall smile, but still implore  
Sweet Death to give his wearied spirit rest.

## PART II

### THE DEATH OF ORPHEUS

Fair Thrace, thou cradle of the youth of song,  
Where every Nymph and Dryad sweetly sings,  
Roaming thy sunny fields and vales along  
While to their joyous strains the hillside rings:  
Where every Satyr pipes on tuneful reed,  
And nightingales pour out their melting notes,  
Deep down within thy shadiest covert hid,  
Whence to the ear their liquid warbling floats:  
Yet hast thou other scenes more bleak and drear,  
Where Haemos rears his rocky crest on high,  
While low-hung clouds droop threatening and near,  
And Strymon's torrents hurtle racing by.  
Here, these unfriendly hills and peaks among,  
Lived for a time he whom we all adore,  
His lyre attuned alone to sorrow's song  
Till death's release on fatal Hebrus' shore.  
Each gentle dweller of the field and wood,  
Each rushing Faun, and Satyr overbold,  
Each dripping Naiad and all spirits good  
The pitful sad story oft have told.

Muse of the pure and tender lyric song,  
Look down upon thy humble servant here,  
Thou spirit beautiful and sweet and strong,  
Oh, listen to my calling, come thou near

And touch my pen with thine own finger white,  
And breathe into my soul thy sacred breath,  
So shalt thou help in fitting strain to write  
The story of his suffering and death.

After his wild despair at Hades' gate,  
When Orpheus fell stricken by the blow  
Dealt to his shattered hopes by hand of Fate,  
Oblivion long enfolded him from woe.  
The desolated cry of golden strings  
Struck without knowledge or a sane desire,  
Swept backward through the realm, borne on the  
wings

Of the sweet spirit of that living lyre.  
Through farthest Hades, even to the ear  
Of fair Persephone still bowed in grief  
Awakened by those strains so sweet and clear,  
Came the sad cry of sorrow past relief.  
And with the cry arose a woeful sight,  
For pale Eurydice swept fluttering  
Down to her feet in broken wavering flight  
Like butterfly on bruised and crumpled wing.  
Stirred to compassion by the bitter cries,  
She bade a dusky spirit at her side  
Fly thither where the poet stricken lies,  
And bear him, all unconscious, o'er the wide  
Vast stretches of the sea and hill and plain  
That lay between him and the shady groves  
Of far off Thrace, and place him once again  
Among the smiling meadows that he loves.

And now the poet from the drowsy swoon  
Slowly awakens, but he knows not where.  
To his dimmed ears there comes the buzzing tune  
Of busy bees among the blossoms fair.  
And as he lieth peaceful, odors rare  
Enchant him with the summer's golden breath,



Till slowly memory returns to tear  
His bosom yet anew with grief like death.

His roving eye in deep amazement sees  
The well remembered sylvan scenes of yore,  
Whose flowers and rivulets and waving trees  
Shall give him joy or pleasure nevermore.  
Then pierced by anguish straight doth he upstart,  
And grasping firm the sweet enchanted lyre,  
Onward he wanders, death within his heart,  
Quenched now forever his celestial fire.

The pitying Nymphs and Naiads come and go  
Waiting for those sweet strains he sang of old:  
But murmured chords of deep enshrouded woe  
Are all that issue from those strings of gold.  
The sluggish weeks and months pass slowly by.  
Time brings no solace to his riven breast.  
Ever the image of Eurydice  
More firmly on his reeling mind's impressed.  
Unceasingly he singeth of her loss  
While many a lovely maiden, sweet and coy,  
Would gladly lift from him his heavy cross  
And lead him back to love's delight and joy.  
His mournful thoughts are bent on her alone  
Who languishes in Hades dark and drear,  
Far, far removed from warming ray of sun,  
Or song of birds or waters running clear.  
Enwapt in this fond dream he sees pass by  
All other maidens as dim shadows there,  
Nothing is real but Eurydice,  
Still to his eyes his living lady fair.

Foredoomed to death, he wanders from the plain  
And seeks the rocky cliffs of Haemos high:  
There amid clouds and mists he mourns in vain,  
While from afar is heard his eery cry.

Yet higher up the stony mountain side  
He climbs, still breathing out the name so dear;  
No gentle Nymph doth in these wilds abide,  
Only faint Echo wanders sighing here.  
Roaming at will, he finds a little grot.  
Here doth he slowly fade day after day.  
Feeble the hands and weak that long have taught  
The strings among Pierian songs to stray.  
Those shapely limbs whose slender pliant grace  
Has carried him afar, too far in sooth,  
That radiant form, that clear and buoyant face,  
Are ravaged now by gnawing frailty's tooth.  
And veiled sorrow on her ebon plume  
Forever floats above his drooping head,  
So that he walks in shadow, whether gloom  
Or shine be o'er the rugged hillside spread.

Seeing strange visions now, he wanders far.  
Ever his fancy one fair face deludes,  
Leading him onward like a guiding star  
To the deep vales where the dusk silence broods.  
And as he goes, he deems that all around  
He's scattering his songs so wild and free.  
Alas! the strings give but a murmurous sound,  
Like the deep droning of the laden bee.

So wandering fitful through the rocky pass,  
He hies him on to rushing Hebrus' shore,  
Seeking that happiness which he, alas,  
Shall find among the sons of men no more.  
Till, straying aimless through a leafy glade,  
He sees the silver gleam of women's breasts  
And snowy sides, the dazzling picture made  
More dark the background upon which it rests.  
With thought confused in his dim wildered brain,  
He sees the sheen of that dear golden hair,

And crying out his joy full loud and plain,  
He rushes in among those Maenads fair.

But hate and fierce resentment in them burn  
'Gainst one who dared to view their secret rites:  
Forthwith upon that wasted form they turn  
Whose eager searching eye their wrath invites.  
Then this wild rout, among the sweet green leaves,  
Crazed by some maddened Bacchanalian whim,  
Strike the foul blow that all the world bereaves,  
And fragile limb is rent from fragile limb.  
Now in the wanton rage that license breeds,  
His head and lyre adown the stream are sent:  
While they, forgetting straight their ghastly deeds,  
Again throughout the forest singing went.

Up from the mangled body rose the sprite,  
Exultant, throbbing in its ecstasy,  
And swifter than the starry meteor's flight,  
Swept down at last to join Eurydice.

A gentle spirit of the mazy wood  
Had viewed the scene with horror-stricken eyes,  
And from the ghastly copse, bestrewn with blood,  
She seeks the mount where springs Pierian rise.  
Swept into action by the heartless tale,  
The sacred Nine, on glorious wings outspread,  
Down to the gloomy forest quickly sail  
Where that sweet shuddering spirit them hath led.  
Midst flowing tears, with tender loving care,  
The sacred limbs are gathered from the earth,  
And to Olympus the loved form they bear,  
Where all divine and splendid things have birth,

Where beechen shadows waver to and fro,  
Where plaining nightingales' mellifluous breath  
Makes sweet his sepulchre, they laid him low,  
The gold and vermeil tinted flowers beneath.

But when Apollo heard the tale of woe,  
Sitting triumphant in his fiery car,  
Seizing his fell, unerring, golden bow,  
In wrath he dropped adown the ether far.  
Full soon that cruel band of Maenads bold  
Had reached the limit of their earthly quest,  
And lay disheveled on the soft brown mould,  
Each with Apollo's arrow through her breast.

For many a rood around the fatal spot  
No gentle Nymph nor tree-born Dryad dwells.  
Each Naiad hath forsook her pebbly grot.  
Unheeded now the crystal fountain wells.  
Those fountains soon are choked with leaves and  
mould,  
And give no moisture to the thirsting roots:  
The grass is dead, the earth, now dry and cold,  
No longer nourishes the tender shoots.  
Each drooping leaf has bowed its faded head,  
Enmeshed by spider and the blasting worm:  
The trees at last have all their greenery shed  
And naked bow before the ruthless storm.  
And over this drear spot no bird beats wing,  
But looking down from his aerial path,  
In widest circle far aside doth swing,  
Seeking some grove not cursed by Phoebus' wrath.  
For many ages they who passed might view  
This desert strange with foliage sere and brown—  
A fitting monument for that mad crew  
Who dimmed the lustre of fair music's crown.

Now doth the Muse with light compelling touch  
Lead where the Hebrus rushes dark and drear  
Twixt sombre banks, while winter's frosty clutch  
Is felt within her waters chill and clear.

Far, far, adown her restless currents ride

That sacred head and lyre of living gold.  
And lo! in order due, along each side,  
A bright procession, lovely to behold.  
Fair Nymphs and Naiads and Okeanids,  
And Nereids from the sapphire caves below,  
And Tritons whom divine Poseidon bids  
Guard them wherever waters rest or flow;  
And dolphins on their undulating path,  
And hippocamps with blood red nostrils wide,  
And mane outstreaming on the gentle breath  
Of sparkling breezes flying o'er the tide.

And so throughout the land, down to the shore  
Where spreads the isle-bespangled sea Aegean,  
Whence great Poseidon ruleth evermore  
The dwellers in his watery empyrean.  
Liparian Aeolus imprisoned all  
The winds that scourge the ever-changing sea,  
And flowered Zephyrus to him doth call  
And bids him waft those relics tenderly  
Down to the Lesbian shore, whose golden sands,  
Shall give that tortured visage peace and rest;  
Sheltered from every act of cruel hands,  
No more by cheating fate to be distressed.  
So on they move through pathless waters wide,  
Safeguarded from the briny monster's maw;  
Before them and behind the Tritons glide  
And force obedience to Poseidon's law.  
The ruffling wavelets in their rise and fall  
Give to the lyre a gentle swaying motion,  
Whereat there rises a sweet murmurous call,  
Soothing more dreamfully than Morphean potion.

The watery cavalcade sails swiftly on,  
Wafted along by Zephyr's fragrant breath,  
Till, slowly sinking, the bright summer sun  
Incarnadines the daylight's coming death.

Now Leto comes, and with her shadowy hand  
Spreads her dusk veil the earth and ocean o'er.  
Still through the darkness doth the mournful band  
Press onward to the wooded Lesbian shore.  
Before the noon of night fair Dian's orb  
Swings quickly o'er the far horizon's rim,  
Wherefrom those gracious sea-born Nymphs absorb  
Comfort as down its silver path they swim.  
And when Aurora's dewy lips had kissed  
From off the earth and from the ocean blue  
The trailing darkness and low-hanging mist,  
Behold, fair Lesbos framed within their view.

The mighty motion of the morning swell  
Wafted the lyre full gently to the height  
Of a low rocky islet: pearly shell  
And coral pink, and shining seaweed bright  
Were all its resting place. And here it lay  
Forsaken, on that lonely island wild,  
Until the coming of a later day  
When it should shine in glory undefiled.

The tearful Nymphs at last have reached the end  
Of this, their pious quest, and from the seas  
With slow and mournful steps their way they wend,  
Amid their many-voicèd harmonies.  
The weeping Nereids dig with rosy shells  
A grave upon the peaceful Lesbian strand,  
And where the hallowed mound the surface swells,  
They lay dark cypress boughs with snowy hand.  
There in an ilex grove that sacred head  
Lies buried by the ever-sounding sea:  
Where rhythmic surges round its lowly bed  
Beat out their thunderous diapason free.  
About the grave beneath the sheltering trees  
Immortal amaranths and lilies grow.  
The song of birds and drowsy hum of bees

Still linger near his face who loved them so.  
And there, among the groves, the nightingale  
Laments in saddest notes of sorrowing:  
And sweeter song, so says the ancient tale,  
Shall never bird to listening mortal sing.

When mighty Jove the tale of sorrow heard  
Of this sad life by Fate's decree crushed down,  
To deep compassion was his bosom stirred,  
Upon his brow a grave and thoughtful frown.  
Then swiftly that enchanted lyre he grasped  
And set it high within the northern skies.  
There, to the universal bosom clasped,  
It joins creation's spherul harmonies.  
And from the sapphire deeps its golden glow  
Burns downward through earth's dim and misty  
veil

To our adoring eyes upraised below,  
In witness of the truth of all this tale.

Divinest bard, on earth there singeth still  
The spirit of the music thou hast given.  
Thy strains the hearts of erring mortals fill  
With purest happiness this side of heaven.  
Through all of thy great suffering and pain,  
Out of the scourgings of adversity,  
Sore punished, thou hast yet this final gain,  
Thy name stands ever for sweet Constancy.

## AVE DIANA

Fair goddess of our hearts and of the night,  
Shedding afar thy silver glory pure,  
Bathing the heavens in effulgence bright,  
Who else could so attract us and allure?  
Within the radiance of thy crystal beam,  
Where all of witchery and charm abide,  
Our spirits drift as on a summer stream  
Twixt flowery banks down to the ocean wide.  
And out across the silvery ocean vast  
We float, unmindful of the flight of time,  
Lulled by soft lapping waves, until at last  
They bring us to a strange and wondrous clime  
Where all is clear and pure and radiant  
As are thy beams, thou lovely goddess dear,  
Where poesy and music ever haunt  
The flowery meads and waters running clear.  
Here in this happy land no sadness dwells,  
Nothing is known of sorrow, naught of fear,  
No vain regret the tortured bosom swells,  
And suffering has never entered here.  
Throughout the land are fountains sweet and clear,  
Deep shaded dells with thickest verdure clad,  
While ever and anon the sportive deer  
Betrays his presence by his antics glad.  
Along the pleasant sylvan paths there lie  
Fair gardens blossoming in the delight  
Of sun and dew, until the charmed eye  
Is weary with excess of colors bright.  
And further on the hills begin to rise,  
Covered with forests to the summit steep.  
Here lurk the Dryads, who with curious eyes  
Peep at us as we pass through shadows deep.

So pressing on into the ancient wood,  
We come at last into an open glade



Nestled among the mountains which have stood  
Guarding this woodland vale since time was made.  
Across the level sweeps of cooling lawn  
Flowers run riot, and the pebbly rills  
Murmur their sweetest music, which has gone  
Into our hearts, and every longing stills.  
Midmost within this happy vale serene,  
Surrounded by lithe vines and thorn trees bare,  
Which intertwining, form a living screen,  
Rises a bower more than earthly fair.  
And round about the lovely bower, a band  
Of maiden Nymphs, each one of beauty rare,  
Sing and make merry, dancing hand in hand,  
Their joyous music filling all the air.

Oh, now indeed, we know where thou hast led  
Our feet, fair goddess of the silver face!  
These be thy Nymphs before whom Actaeon fled,  
Thy comrades in the pleasures of the chase.  
Here ever faithful watch and ward they keep,  
Forever closing in their magic ring  
Round thy Endymion in his deathless sleep;  
And, watching ever, clear and sweet they sing.

O goddess of the chase,  
Give us thy presence fair,  
Oh teach us yet to trace  
The wild beast to his lair.

Ever thy silver bow  
Hath been our strong ally.  
Forsake us then not thou.  
Still for thy help we cry.

Here in this peaceful vale  
Thy watch and ward we keep  
Over thy lover pale,  
Deep in his dreamful sleep.

Lead us, O queen of night,  
Rushing across the plain,  
To follow in wild flight  
Thy crescent once again.

Only to hear thy bow  
Twang as we heard of old,  
Thy voice so sweet and low  
Giving its orders bold.

Only to hear thy horn  
Waking the echoes far—

At this is heard a note with liquid roll  
So sweet and yearning that it penetrates  
Down to the shivering caverns of the soul,  
Whence echoing, at once it recreates  
And brings to life all those desires intense  
Which from of old have held us in their grasp,  
And throbs and thrills and aches through every  
sense,

Holding our spirits in its tender clasp;  
Sobbing and wailing in its wistful sweetness  
Until our very heartstrings give a cry,  
Strained past endurance in their incompleteness,  
Not yet attuned to heaven's harmony.

And now athwart the blue empyrean,  
Gliding as straight as light, swift as a dove,  
Cometh a vision which may ne'er again  
Be seen by any eyes save those above.  
For radiant in celestial glory,  
Behold, fair Dian, than a fawn more fleet,  
Not chaste and cold as in the olden story,  
But blushing rosy red, divinely sweet.  
For she has come, smit by the pain divine,  
To seek her lover, young Endymion,

And pour along his veins such fiery wine  
Would wake to life a block of wood or stone.

But ere she entereth into her bliss  
Each Nymph with gracious kindness she would  
greet,

Approaching first now that one and now this,  
Blessing the herbage with her tender feet.  
At last into the inmost bower she's gone,  
Which straightway glows with roselight pale and  
clear,

All sleep has from those heavy eyelids flown,  
Enraptured he beholds his goddess near.  
And now come gently murmured words of love,  
Tender complainings such as lovers use,  
Heart pressed to heart in wildest, throbbings move,  
While lips from nectar'd lips sip sweetest dew.

Too soon, alas! the wingèd hours have flown  
And Cynthia must back into the sky.  
Else would all Nature cry and make great moan  
Could she not see her goddess clear and high.  
For dearer to the night that face so pure  
Than to parched crops the gently falling rain,  
So must the loving goddess now immure  
The hapless youth within his dreams again.  
This done, out of that blissful vale she swept,  
Which straightway gloomed, losing her presence  
bright.

And we who far and far have overstepped  
The bounds of earthly life, led by the light  
Of sweetest Dian, never shall believe  
Those tales that call her the pale chilly moon.  
Such words can never more our minds deceive,  
For we have seen her with Endymion.

## TO A RED SUNSET

O great Apollo, what beauties follow  
Thy roseate car at dawn!  
But better than those are the gold and rose  
Thou bringest when day is gone.  
When the stars peep out and complete thy rout  
As thou sinkest in the west,  
And thy streamers red, flung far overhead,  
Herald thy coming rest.

To mortal vision the gates Elysian  
Seem opened for a time,  
And from the towers and airy bowers  
Familiar in legend and rhyme,  
There comes a blessing beyond all guessing  
To those of us who know  
That our mortal eyes see the smile that flies  
From the gods to earth below.

Still the splendor falls on the eye and enthalls  
Our hearts with the vision bright;  
The glowing hues interweave and suffuse  
The heavens with golden light,  
Till all must adore, and the sun-god implore  
That in some future clime  
Our spirits may float to that region remote,  
And bathe in that flood sublime.

Now the afterglow and the shadows show  
That the god of day has fled.  
The colors fade into many a shade  
Of purple, saffron and red,  
While the clouds so gay become cold and gray  
As the twilight waxes old,  
And the fires so bright burn dim in our sight,  
And turn to ashes cold.

In the near-by trees, with never a breeze,  
There comes a rustling deep,  
'Tis the birds o'erhead in their airy bed  
Settling themselves to sleep.  
As the daylight dies and the gem-like eyes  
Of the twinkling stars appear,  
The vision departs and leaves in our hearts  
Only a memory dear.

## THE SIRENS

Out across the sunny reaches  
Of the sparkling sapphire sea,  
There, along the golden beaches,  
Beautiful entrancingly,

Fairest sea-maidens repeating  
Sunshine's glints in lustrous hair,  
Stretch out lovely arms entreating  
Us to come and join them there.

Then those pleading accents tremble  
Into harmony divine;  
Sweeter voice may ne'er dissemble  
Love that ever doth repine.

Still those notes from sweet lips falling  
Promise happiness to be,  
Calling, calling, ever calling  
To those isles amid the sea.

## WHEN BACCHUS CAME

The world was new and all the gods  
Were mad with youth and love,  
And Titans trembled at the nods  
Of heaven-defying Jove.  
Then were the halcyon days of old  
Of which the ancient poets told.

Then Dryads swarmed in every grove.  
Then every crystal pool,  
Whose whispering reeds and rushes wove  
A bower fresh and cool,  
Showed far beneath its mirrored face  
Some shimmering Naiad's dwelling place.

In meads where nodding flowers move,  
The murmurous bees intone  
The drowsy litany of love,  
More dulcet than their own  
Most fragrant treasure, when it swells  
The waxen semiluculent cells.

The flowering almond's avalanche  
Of blossoms pink and white  
Sends many a downward curving branch  
O'er hidden bowers bright,  
Wherefrom, with innate coquetry,  
Blithe Nymphs set fluttering glances free.

And round about, the jocund sound  
Of piping and of song  
Comes from each velvet-swarded mound  
Where Nymphs and Satyrs throng.  
While twining arms and twinkling feet,  
And willowy forms make grace complete.

Far in a vale, where tumbled hills  
Skirt the Boeotian plain,  
The last outlying sentinels  
Of great Parnassus' train,  
Behold, a vision of delight!  
A maid in spring-time jewels dight.

On dewy rose and violet  
Lies Semele the fair,  
While rosemary and mignonette  
Enwreath her wondrous hair.  
The first is for remembrance meet,  
The second makes remembrance sweet.

In alternating white and red,  
Flushing at every sound,  
She waits with joy akin to dread,  
A queen with blushes crowned.  
Well may high Jove enchanted be  
Devotion such as hers to see.

But hark, a step! Now fluttering heart  
Lie quiet in thy nest,  
Else must thy throbbing impulse start  
Soft tumult in that breast,  
Whose tender billowings would betray  
The love that sweeps her soul away.

Nay gentle maid, with downcast eyes  
Fixed on the flowery earth,  
This is not he whose ardent sighs  
Give to thy love new birth.  
The languorous air doth not enfold  
Thy god-like wooer uncontrolled.

Fair as a dream before her stands  
A being all divine,



Whose gracious smiles, like silken bands,  
About the heart entwine.  
Thus jealous Hera craftily  
Approaches youthful Semele

“Bright jewel of the Cadmean race,  
Happy art thou above  
All others, since thy lissome grace  
Hath lured e’en mighty Jove  
To seek thy blissful earthly bower:  
Although compact of god-like power.

Nay, blush not thus because I know  
Thy secret sweet and dear.  
With friendship true this heart doth glow.  
Disarm thee of thy fear.  
Secure and peaceful mayst thou rest:  
Thy tale is buried in my breast.”

Then with alluring blandishment  
And favoring glances kind,  
She moved to where in wonderment  
The blushing maid reclined,  
And sinking to apparent rest,  
She drew the maiden to her breast.

And twined the massive coils of hair  
About her soothing hand,  
And murmured tender words and fair  
In accents sweet and bland;  
Until the doubting maid, at last,  
Her fear to all the winds has cast.

“But know, O Semele”, she said,  
“The keenest joy of all  
As yet hath never visited  
Thy heart. May it befall

That soon thy wondering eyes shall see  
Thy loved one in his majesty.

Past mortal thought his grandeur shines  
O'erpanoplied with cloud,  
The lightnings round his arm he twines,  
While bursting thunder loud,  
Like echoes from vast heavenly drums,  
Reverberating downward comes.

Well do I know thy lover bright:  
His modesty's a jest  
Among the gods. Demand the sight,  
He shall deny thy quest.  
By subtlety shalt thou attain  
To that whereof thy heart were fain.

Ask thou thy boon: then as he stands  
Before thee, let him swear  
To grant whate'er thy love demands  
Ere thou thy wish declare.  
And bid him swear, his faith to fix,  
By ebon waters of the Styx.

Now lovely Cadmean, adieu.  
Forget not what I've told  
For thine own good, in friendship true;  
And may thy heart be bold  
To seek that which is thine by right,  
Thy lover at his glory's height."

Unclasping her enfolding arms,  
She leaves the maid at rest,  
While new desires and vague alarms  
Disturb that peaceful breast.  
Then fades adown the flowery vale  
Like drifting wreath of vapor frail.

Upon her couch where roses glow  
And daffodillies fine  
Invert their cups, with overflow  
Of all their dewy wine,  
The pensive maiden musing lies,  
With brooding, thought-o'ershadowed eyes.

Far in the upper realms of light  
A piercing scream is heard:  
In palpitating, headlong flight  
Descends Jove's royal bird.  
Full well the blithesome maiden knew  
This herald from her lover true.

With pinions set, he sails adown  
The trackless paths of air,  
And at her feet is gently thrown  
A token sweet and fair,  
The flower that first saw light of day  
Where dying Hyacinthus lay.

Then with a cry of hoarse disdain  
For all save power and might,  
Tremendous throbbing wings again  
Bear him from mortal sight.  
More fierce a messenger may ne'er  
The tender thought of lover bear.

Full oft she's seen that cruel face  
With golden eyes of doom,  
Those talons from whose fell embrace  
No living thing may come.  
Yet howsoever oft he's sent,  
Chill fear is with her raptures blent.

Now stooping where the flower lies,  
Within the blissful nest

Of her soft bosom's fall and rise  
She cradles it to rest;  
And with its balmy breath inspires  
Renewal of her love-lit fires.

While thus in musings sweet she stood,  
Her eyes with love aflame,  
From out a grove of ilex wood  
Her royal lover came.  
With outstretched arms and flying feet  
He speeds the blushing maid to meet.

The first ecstatic greeting done,  
With beaming eyes she said,  
"My lord of love, I crave a boon,  
Wilt grant it to thy maid?"  
"Tis thine before the thought," said he,  
"What gift shall I not bring to thee?"

"Nay, not so fast, my lover bold,  
Deem of thy maid no ill,  
But first, before my will I've told,  
My longing to fulfil,  
I pray thee swear to grant me this  
By what to thee most sacred is."

Then o'er his smiling face a shade  
Of doubt and anger came:  
As when a cloud o'er sunny glade  
Makes dim the roses' flame;  
But as the sun shines out again,  
His smiles returned and he began.

"By that dread stream of nether hell  
Whose sable waters run  
Past gloomy fields of asphodel  
In twilight shadows dun,

I swear to do thy very will:  
Thine utmost longing to fulfil.

Now little disbeliever, art  
Thou not content that I  
Have done my meek subservient part,  
Who else am stern and high,  
And yield not lightly to command?  
See, here thy servant now I stand."

With eyes whose languorous content  
Promise a full reward,  
In utter self-abandonment  
She flees to him, her lord.  
Be sure his eager lips shall meet  
Her dewy lips all cool and sweet.

"Fair Semele, now say thy say,  
Behold thy servant stands  
In burning ardor to obey  
His dearest love's commands.  
What is it thou wouldst have me bring?  
'Tis thine ere swiftest bird might wing

His way across the little space  
Between my heart and thine.  
What is there of my utmost grace  
That should not equal shine  
On thee within thy flowery nest,  
And me, who am thy lover blest?"

"O lord of love, thy task is light;  
Thou needest not to bring  
Thy sandaled messenger, whose flight  
Outruns the tempest's wing.  
As Jove the thunder-bearer, I  
Would see thee pass in majesty."

Then for a time amazed he stood,  
While in his visage drear  
Surprise and consternation showed  
Her danger great and near.  
Her innocence and ignorance  
Have put him in this sudden trance.

"Light of my eyes, thou knowest not  
The task thou'st set for me.  
Celestial laws bind me about,  
In this I am not free.  
No living mortal e'er may view  
That sight, but bids the world adieu.

But since I've sworn that fatal oath  
Naught can absolve me now  
From strict obedience, how loath  
Soe'er to scorch thy brow.  
So pray thee grant me heart of grace,  
And take some other wish in place."

"But nay, but nay, my lover high,  
So great a god as thou  
Must know some secret means whereby  
Mayst ward the fatal blow,  
And let me see thee stern and grand,  
And yet remain within thy land."

"Rash maid, thou wringst my heart with fear:  
Oh change this foolish whim.  
I'll show thee where the elfins leer.  
I'll guide thee through the dim  
Vast spaces of the realms below,  
Where even celestials may not go.

Within their gloomy caves thou'lt see  
The monstrous fiends of hell.

I'll wander hand in hand with thee  
Through fields of asphodel.  
We'll see the fair, sad queen of pain,  
Rapt from the flowers on Enna's plain.

I'll lead thee o'er the ocean's foam,  
And through the western seas  
Where lies the happy island home  
Of the Hesperides.  
Within their wondrous gardens grew  
The golden apple Eris threw.

Then, winging northward, we shall see  
Where wintry whirlwinds blow,  
And fill the drear immensity  
With drifting worlds of snow;  
In lambent flushes o'er the skies  
The pulsating aurora flies.

Here broods the everlasting night.  
Here Zephyr never brings  
His flowery season of delight.  
Here never song-bird sings,  
But shivering in the frozen air,  
In ambush lurks the monstrous bear.

Along the wind-swept icy shore,  
Where all things else congeal,  
Is heard the far off barking roar  
Of walrus and of seal:  
While on the deep, leviathan  
Heaves his huge bulk through summers wan.

We two will go where Saturn's rings  
Whirl round his heart of flame,  
And where the blazing comet flings  
Through space beyond a name:

And where Polaris swings in air  
His playmates of the little Bear.

Where shooting stars like torches glow,  
And Dog-star fell doth shine:  
Where baleful planets earthward throw  
Their influence malign,  
And star-dust swarms like fiery bees  
Among the maiden Pleiades.

We'll go where fire, erupted, runs  
From burning star to star;  
Where gyrating and seething suns  
Throw molten worlds afar;  
Where fierce Arcturus leads the van,  
And mocks at slow Aldebaran.

But terror reigns not here alone,  
For Lyra's throbbing strong  
Gives out a grand sweet undertone  
Amid a heaven of song;  
And thus shall strike thy ravished ears  
The music of the heavenly spheres.

Then plunging through the ocean's swell,  
Beneath the solid land,  
We'll see the sapphire caves where dwell  
The lovely Nereid band,  
And dolphins undulating through  
The twilight floods of deepest blue.

Though storms above our path may rage,  
We'll wander, you and I  
Through groves of wondrous foliage  
Unwonted to the eye;  
While brilliant sea-born creatures swim  
Along the fronded vistas dim.



We'll seek the swells where Tritons blow  
Their hollow far-heard horns  
In gentle cadence, soft and low,  
On sunny summer morns;  
And see Poseidon sweep along  
Behind sea-horses fierce and strong.

Men shall be swept to war for thee.  
Shalt hear their stirring cries  
In battle both on land and sea;  
And deeds of high emprise  
Shall make thy fame more fresh and green  
Than Helena's, the Argive queen.

Wealth shall be thine beyond desire,  
And gems of every hue.  
The diamond with its eye of fire  
Is thine, and sapphire blue.  
Resplendent then thy form shall shine  
As Iris with her bow divine.

And when thy days on earth are o'er  
Thy gentle sprite I'll bring  
To that far happy western shore  
Where reigns eternal spring,  
And brightest sunshine ever smiles  
Above the blest Elysian isles.

And thou shalt ever hold my love,  
For thee this bosom glows.  
The maid beneath the shield of Jove  
Is safe from fortune's blows.  
O maiden mine, my heart is sore;  
Give me my happiness once more!"

He ceased, and sombre eyes of dread  
Plead strongly for recall

Of that rash wish by which the maid  
Held him within her thrall.  
But yet she deemed that he might still  
In harmless wise her wish fulfil.

“And art thou he, my lover fond?  
Thou makst a jest of love.  
Can there be aught that lies beyond  
The power of might Jove?  
Shall I, thy handmaid, never see  
Thine all-compelling majesty?”

“Though puissant in things that deal  
With nature, laws obtain  
Which bind the gods in gyves of steel.  
We have encountered twain.  
An oath sworn by that ebon flood  
Must be fulfilled by every god.

Stern Fate another law has made.  
That mortal sure must die  
Who sees me passing, when arrayed  
In thunder's panoply.  
By all the love I bear thee now,  
Absolve me from that foolish vow.”

But still the words that Hera spoke  
Were ringing in her ear:  
And still she deemed he would revoke  
His stern decision clear  
Could she but make him understand  
How his resistance only fanned

The flame of her desire to see  
That sight, come good or ill;  
And spite of her mortality,  
To bend him to her will.

So hardens now her heart again,  
And makes his dearest pleadings vain.

"Dear lover mine, this breast abounds  
In full affection free,  
And every heartbeat only sounds  
A throbbing call for thee;  
But this desire scorns all control,  
'Tis longing of my inmost soul."

"Fair maid, thou dost not heed my words.  
I tell thee I am bound.  
Like keenest double-edgèd swords  
Thine accents pierce and wound  
A heart made languorous by love  
For thee, whom prayers will never move.

Lo, here I make my last appeal.  
Helpless indeed am I.  
If in thy bosom thou dost feel  
The love thine acts deny,  
Yea, by the love thou bearest me,  
Oh, set me from this promise free."

But Hera's subtle words had brought  
Their deadly mischief now.  
With eyes cast down as if in thought,  
Serene and placid brow,  
"Fair lord, thou knowest my desire,  
Its due fulfilment I require."

Then o'er his face displeasure's veil  
Came like a funeral pall.  
"Thou stubborn maid, will naught avail?  
On thee the bolt must fall.  
But sad and lone this heart will be,  
O foolish, lovely Semele."

With look foreshadowing her doom,  
He turns his face away  
From that fair wilful maiden whom  
The gods perverse still sway.  
Then as a meteor in the night  
Is quenched, he vanishes from sight.

Alarm hath seized the trembling maid  
At his abrupt farewell  
Who erst his partings long delayed,  
In burning words to tell  
How her mere presence filled his soul  
With ecstasy beyond control.

Then mindful of his parting words  
And ominous despair,  
Her fears, like trenchant flaming swords,  
Pierce through that bosom fair.  
With timid apprehensive eye  
She scans the clear translucent sky.

Then casts a timorous look around  
Upon the wide expanse,  
But naught in that fair scene is found  
Her terrors to enhance.  
O'er all the smiling grassy vale  
Deep peace and quietude prevail.

With mounting courage she returns  
Into the flowery maze  
Where every flaming blossom burns  
Sweet incense in her praise,  
And tuneful birds the branches throng  
To charm her with their matin song.

Enshrined like pearl in rosy shell,  
To tender visions given

Of him to whom her bosom's swell  
Brings rapture beyond heaven,  
She still believes his ardent fire  
Will grant her inmost heart's desire.

Within a near-by grove she sees  
A wreath of vapor rise:  
It wavers in the gentle breeze  
Soft as a maiden's sighs,  
As frail and wraith-like doth it seem  
As fabric of a fleeting dream.

Again are heard those raucous cries,  
And through the crystal heaven  
That herald fierce his passage plies,  
On stormy pinions driven.  
Wild joy within her bosom swells.  
Jove's swift arrival he foretells.

Her lover's custom had been such  
That on each happy day,  
Forerunner of his near approach,  
Some token bright and gay  
Was dropped before her snowy feet,  
Twin lilies meshed in grasses sweet.

But, stooping from the heavens down,  
Still nearer and more near,  
On that fair head he drops a crown  
Of cypress branches drear.  
Alarmed, bewildered now, the maid  
Sinks to the earth all sore dismayed.

Then as her wandering glances range  
From place to place, she sees  
A strange and mystifying change  
Among the shivering trees.

The tiny wisp of vapor blue  
Has spread and shows a darker hue.

With eyes as of a frightened child  
She sees it growing still,  
And now it turns and writhes, as wild  
As thunder-clouds that fill  
The wide horizon with the storm  
On summer evenings close and warm.

But see! that threatening form dilates.  
More broad it seems, and higher.  
Its dusky surface scintillates  
With tiny sparks of fire;  
Like summer marshes seen o' nights  
Twinkling with myriad fire-fly lights.

And now there comes a heavy moan  
Like thunder's rumbling jar,  
And rushing sounds that speak alone  
Of tempests heard afar.  
Some force resistless writhes and rends  
Within that cloud, and death portends.

In terror wild the maiden turns,  
But scarce three steps away  
When through the ebon cloud there burns  
A blue and crackling ray.  
Alas, alas, for Semele!  
She's seen Jove's awful majesty.

Then with a blinding glare, and wail  
Of wind, the tempest leaps  
O'er all the place. Across the vale  
The swirling blackness sweeps.  
And lurid flames in wrath devour  
The hapless maiden's secret bower.

Never on any land that lies  
Beneath the shining sun,  
Or any sea whose waters rise  
To greet the alluring moon,  
Shall wistful mortal vision see  
The martyred maiden, Semele.

\* \* \* \* \*

Sweet winds came rushing down the vale  
And swept the clouds away,  
Revealing Jove distraught and pale,  
With features drawn and gray;  
For Sorrow deep within his heart  
Had planted her corroding dart.

With fathomless sad eyes of ruth  
For her thus blindly driven  
By innocence and wilful youth  
Athwart the laws of heaven,  
He gazed around as if to find  
Some token memory-enshrined.

Upon the blackened fire-scarred ground  
A lovely infant shows  
His death-still form, which that discrowned  
And slaughtered mother's throes  
Had left to mighty Jove to prove  
How ardent was her tender love.

Then through his heart swept such a pang  
As only gods can feel.  
Again within his senses rang  
Her piteous appeal.  
Since then all bards commandeth he  
To sing her immortality.

Then swiftly to the infant goes  
And breathes celestial breath  
Into his lips, and overthrows  
The greedy pallid Death.  
The infant moves and gasps and smiles,  
And soon his father's heart beguiles.

Now Jove calls Hermes to his side,  
And bids nor rest nor stay  
Till he in Nysa's valleys wide  
The smiling child might lay;  
And bid the Nymphs and Naiads there  
Give him their loving watchful care.

Thus through pale death and terrors grim,  
And anguished throes of fear,  
The infant came into the dim  
Sad world about us here.  
The son of Jove, a god was he,  
But mortal-framed like Semele.

Of all the names about the earth  
By Fame's clear trumpet blown,  
Of mortal or of heavenly birth,  
Is none more widely known,  
Even to the farthest western sea,  
Than BACCHUS, son of Semele.



## REVERY

When earth lies dead beneath the wintry sky,  
And sparkling stars gleam icily on high,  
And alabaster paths, bediamonded,  
Shriek loudly 'neath the passer's hurrying tread,  
And restless horses breathe twin jets of steam  
That turn to silver in the moon's cold beam,  
And frozen stillness, with her pinions furled,  
Broods o'er the silent gem-encrusted world,  
I sit within the glowing ingle nook  
With pipe and some beloved poet's book:  
And as the gray wood blossoms into flame,  
My mind turns backward, and old pictures frame  
Themselves anew before my dreamy eyes.  
Again I see New England hillsides rise.  
Before me slopes the lichened granite ledge  
With huckleberries all about the edge:  
And shyly peering from their leafy screen,  
The scarlet globes of shining wintergreen.  
Again my eager nostrils can discern  
The spicy fragrance of the rare sweet fern.  
With quick contraction of the heart I feel  
The clasp of tiny fingers, which would steal  
Into my own, and sweet adoring eyes  
Upraised to mine, with childhood's wisdom wise,  
And sunny curls, ah, gentle little maid!  
With whom through all my childish hours I played,  
The winter's snow and summer's blossoms spread  
Their amaranthine white and gold and red  
Above thy quiet bosom, buried deep  
These many years, in the long dreamless sleep.

Beyond our knowledge is the reason why  
This one is spared, while that one's stricken cry  
Peals to the shivering stars. The power above  
(Whose very name and nature must be love,)

Which moulds our plastic being day by day,  
As hand of potter moulds the facile clay,  
Like that same potter treats the fragile ware.  
This lovely vase, of graceful form and fair,  
Is dashed as soon as made. That other one,  
(No fairer to our seeing,) has begun  
A life of wide-spread usefulness, and high  
Sweet service to mankind, but why, oh why?

Far in the shadowy woodlands we explored,  
And found the canny squirrel's wintry hoard.  
And eagerly we seized the sudden prize  
Of nuts, and rushed away with joyful cries.  
But suddenly the maiden sees the pain  
And sorrow of the squirrel, who in vain  
Has labored weary hours 'gainst winter's need.  
Then with eyes dropping purest pearls, she'd plead  
Against my rougher boyish mood, till I  
Felt sorry too, and forthwith back we'd hie,  
Retracing all our steps through meadows sweet  
With thyme and marjoram about our feet;  
And when we reached the winding shady lane,  
The squirrel's granary was filled again.

Or else about the old farmhouse we'd play,  
And watch the tall and slender well-sweep sway  
In summer winds, and rattle in the gale.  
And when some elder came with empty pail,  
'Twould make a stately bow, precise and prim,  
Down even to the well-curb's echoing brim.  
Never were we too busy at our play  
To take refreshment from the bucket gray.  
Ah, well I mind the long delicious sips  
Of sparkling water from its velvet lips.

Anon we'd seek the ancient cider mill,  
Where in its darkling shadows lingered still

Grim dragons, high above or underneath,  
So that we crept about with bated breath.  
But when the autumn came, in his slow round  
The patient horse the odorous apples ground.  
Then she and I with tiny cup in hand  
Sought out the wooden spout whence flowed the  
bland

Sweet life-blood of the fruit. With vessels filled,  
We'd creep to where, with cautious fingers skilled,  
We found sweet home-made cakes of rapturous  
smell,

In the deep earthen jar we knew so well.  
Then underneath the ever-whispering trees,  
Surrounded by the golden-banded bees,  
What wild and joyous banqueting was ours  
Among the shade and sunshine and the flowers!

Now to the child-alluring pond we've flown,  
Where all the marshy borders are bestrewn  
With velvet cat-tails, and the iris blue  
In fascinating clumps of color grew.  
Here sweet winds waft our laden ships to sea,  
Seeking great store of gold and ivory  
In far, dim-visioned, glorious foreign lands,  
And isles of spice begirt with coral strands:  
Till from the grasp of Fancy's visions deep,  
We're startled by the frog's portentous leap.

Far down the sunny field, along the wall  
Where whistling thrush and strident cat-bird call,  
We watch with curious eyes the antics queer  
Of a small family of woodchucks near:  
Till some quick motion frights them to their lair,  
When presto! all we see is empty air.

Alas! like marmots in their vanishing,  
My childhood's dreams unto themselves take wing.  
For now the fire is burning low at last,

And all my memories of the golden past,  
Fade with the fading flames, and die away  
Along with them into cold ashes gray.

Sweet, tiny maiden, in thy narrow bed  
Beneath the beechen boughs, and garlanded  
With trailing vines, and flowers of every hue,  
Kept bright and fresh by heaven's impearling dew,  
I know not if that power which rules us all  
Were not more kind to thee. The stony wall  
Of custom hems us in on every side;  
Surrounded, we, by lying pompous pride,  
And grief and sorrow and temptation sore,  
And sin and pain and death forevermore.  
Whether this life or thine own peaceful rest,  
I know not, oh, I know not, which is best.

## YELLOWSTONE CANYON

Not in the blue Ionian isles  
Nor Arthur's island home,  
Nor on that bay where Capri smiles  
Beneath Vesuvius' dome,

Doth such a dream of beauty burst  
On the astonished eye  
As in this wondrous chasm, lost  
From paradise on high.

Well may the troubled soul adore  
And worship at its shrine,  
Where beauty and majestic power  
Of grandeur intertwine.

Abysses smitten deep below  
Glow with such hues as vie  
With Iris' myriad colored bow  
Arching across the sky.

Gulf beneath gulf, the golden walls  
Yawn pitiless and clear,  
Till on the dizzy brain there falls  
A solemn awe and fear.

Far down within the lowest deep  
A tiny thread of green  
Marks where the battling torrents sweep  
These glowing walls between.

Yonder across the chasm bright,  
A filmy, lacy veil  
Drifting in dazzling gleaming white,  
Seems swayed by every gale.

And high above, a silver mist

Where glistening droplets shine,  
By magic rays of sunlight kissed  
To coloring divine.

O fairy fall, behind thy veil  
Of silver, there lies furled  
A power to make the spirit quail,  
Strength to disrupt a world.

Adown thy shelving roof on high  
Arrowy currents gleam;  
Swift as the meteor through the sky  
They seek the rocky brim,

And with a royal plunge they soar  
Down to the shuddering deeps  
Where blinding chaos evermore  
His boisterous revel keeps.

Relentless as the gates of death,  
And pitiless as hell,  
Woe to the man who feels thy breath  
Or rides upon thy swell!

For him this life is but a span  
Briefer than beat of wing  
With which thy screaming eagles fan  
The spray thou dost upfling.

O canyon beautiful, there rests  
Within my memory still  
The vision of thy sunlit crests,  
Thine emerald waters chill.

And over all, the tenderness  
Of summer's golden haze,  
While every slope the eye doth bless  
With color's lovely maze.

Ruby and pearl and amethyst,  
And sapphire, and the sheen  
Of ruddy gold, no tint is missed  
In all the world, I ween.

Never on any sea or shore,  
Whatever light may shine,  
Or sunlight or when, arching o'er,  
The moon and stars combine,

Shall any scene the earth doth hold  
Smite so enchantingly  
As that when first I saw thy bold  
Bewildering harmony.

Softer than glance of maiden's eyes  
Thy loveliness doth seem.  
Enshrined in memory it lies,  
Fair as youth's wistful dream.

## INDIAN SUMMER

O'er all the earth a golden mist  
By Autumn's hand is hung.  
From every tree her lips have kissed  
Abroad her banner's flung.

And yonder, in among the gold,  
A scarlet flame I see,  
Where that young maple doth unfold  
His dying heart to me.

Along the forest's edge embanked,  
In keenest rivalry,  
The sumac's serried hosts are pranked  
In gorgeous livery.

And over all the riot bold  
Of fitful color's blaze,  
The sun, with level rays of gold  
Pours amethystine haze.

As the wild swan's lone melody  
Floats up when death is nigh,  
Nature her color symphony  
Unfolds ere summer die.

Like fleeting pleasure's lovely face  
Summer must surely be,  
Showing her most alluring grace  
Just as she turns to flee.



## LINES WRITTEN AT INDIAN MOUND PARK

Far in the dim unstoried past,  
Of which no legend tells,  
These tumuli, with labors vast,  
Were reared o'er cryptic cells.

Upon this bold projecting crest,  
Where all the breezes fanned  
The grasses growing o'er their rest,  
Repose that mystic band.

Here the long quiet dreamless sleep,  
Whose waking troubles still  
The human heart, with questions deep,  
Brought balm for every ill.

The old and wise, the young and fair,  
Were gathered here at last,  
And found relief from earthly care,  
In that long distant past.

And who of us shall say tonight  
What longings strange and dim,  
What wistful yearnings toward the light,  
Midst terrors vague and grim,

Led them to this enchanted spot  
Where, haply, their sad eyes  
Amid the sunset's glories caught  
A hint of paradise?

Wide spreading underneath them sweep,  
Fair as sweet Fancy's dream,  
Forests and vales and valleys, deep  
Embowered along the stream—

The mystic stream that takes its rise  
Far within northern lands,  
And ends where summer never dies,  
Along palm-shaded strands.

Sweet be their sleep! Unknown to them  
Grim failure's withering blight;  
The dull and sordid cares that hem  
The spirit's upward flight.

Sweet be their sleep! As wild and free  
As soaring skylark's song,  
Dismayed their simple souls would be  
Among our modern throng.

Sweet be their sleep! 'Neath sun and dew,  
In wind and starlight chill,  
They dream the long bright summers through  
Upon their sacred hill.

## YULE-TIDE

The King of Yule he strides abroad  
With voice as blithe and gay  
As when he ruled the festal board  
In bluff King Harry's day.

A hale old soul is our King Yule,  
For countless ages he  
Has spread his kindly hearty rule  
Over all lands that be.

His mighty feasts in days of old  
Were shared by mighty men,  
But round his board true hearts of gold  
Still gather now as then.

What though the days of stricken field  
And deeds at arms are gone?  
What though with sword and spear and shield  
No battle now is won?

Stout hearts must bear the brunt of blows  
Keener than sword or spear;  
Undaunted souls face sterner foes  
Than mail-clad cavalier.

The times are changed, but still the flower  
Of knighthood burgeons free,  
And he is blessed who has the dower  
Of truth and bravery.

So, like our sires of old, may we  
With joyous hearts and kind,  
Engage in love and amity  
Where yule-tide wreaths are twined.

May every soul in Christendom  
Be gladdened by the ray  
Of Bethlehem's bright star that shone  
On Christ his own birth-day.

## TO MARGUERITE

(On the occasion of her début)

Oft in the sunset's golden light  
My wandering spirit strays  
Through smiling gardens' pathways, bright  
With all their flowery blaze.

And straying mid the blossomings  
With dream-enchanted eyes,  
I muse on all heart-easing things  
The flowers symbolize.

The rose's fragrant bosom glows  
With love's unquenched desire,  
While through the lily's veins there flows  
A spiritual fire.

To the forget-me-not is given  
Remembrance of the past.  
The violet's eyes are blue as heaven,  
Sweet to the very last.

The hyacinth's the child of woes;  
Narcissus is self-love.  
The cloying sweets of tuberose  
To drowsy languor move.

The orchid is a stately dame  
Of arrogance supreme.  
The poppy, with her scarlet flame,  
Brings many a lovely dream.

Carnation's beauty is complete;  
The pansy's thoughtful still.

Who loves not in his heart the sweet,  
Downglancing daffodil?

But still I know not what fair flower  
Shall typify to me  
Bright friendship's fascinating power  
Through all the time to be.

In vain I search my garden gay,  
When, lo! here at my feet,  
Just budding out this very day,  
Behold, the "Marguerite"!

## ALONGSHORE

Ho for the rough waves dashing!  
Ho for my island home,  
Where racing breakers threshing,  
Leave wakes of beaded foam!

Where in the wild March weather  
Spindrift and foam together  
Tap at the window pane.  
Unheeding rein or tether  
These birds of wildest feather  
Seek entrance here in vain.

Brightly the high sun shineth  
Over a flowing sea.  
No mortal e'er divineth  
How great its glories be!  
Silver and gold and azure  
Mixed in no earthly measure  
Give hint of mystic treasure  
Where Nereids dance in glee.

But when the sun is sunken  
Below the watery rim,  
And all its light is shrunken  
To silver gleamings dim,  
Cruel and ruthless is the sea  
As veiled destiny.

Now creeping o'er the ocean  
In slow unhurried motion,  
Comes the mist demon's frown.  
With wrack of clouds low-lying,  
Wind-twisted vapors flying,  
And far-heard sea birds crying,  
The lonely night comes down.

Still, though unseen, the surges  
Beat at the rock that scourges  
And drives them to the main;  
While winds wail round the gables  
As did, in ancient fables,  
Unshriven souls in pain.

But wind and wave and weather  
All merge their sounds together  
Into a song of rest,  
And sleep, the blissful maiden,  
Gathers the sorrow-laden  
Soul to her quiet breast.

## SPRING SONG

My soul is swung  
Like sweet bells rung  
In mellow limpid peals,  
This springtime day  
When blithe and gay  
The earth in transport reels.

The grasses peep  
From slumber deep,  
And smile to meet the sun:  
The new buds swell  
In wood and dell,  
And blossoms every one.

The young woods show  
A tender glow  
Of delicatest green;  
While through and through,  
On branch and bough  
The sunlight pours between.

And from the earth,—  
A kindling birth,—  
The dainty dwellers spring  
Who fill our cup  
With pleasure up  
In life's new blossoming.

Now over all  
The seneschal  
Of spring's awakening days,  
The gentle rain,  
Brings in its train  
Sweet Flora's lovely maze,



The harebell blue,  
The tender hue  
On fern and mandrake set,  
Anemone,—  
But chiefly thee,  
O springtime violet!

From tree to tree  
Their ecstasy  
The trilling chorus pour,  
And swell their throats  
With dulcet notes  
Of rapture o'er and o'er.

Along the shore  
Where evermore  
The willows bend and sway,  
Each velvet bud  
Stirs in the blood  
A springtime roundelay.

The shoreward crew  
Whose shrill ado  
Is heard both near and far,  
Redouble all  
Their piping call  
Beneath the evening star.

And when the gleam  
Of Dian's beam  
Comes like a spirit's kiss,  
My senses reel,  
I seem to feel  
The Latmian shepherd's bliss.

## A POET'S HEART

Within a vale of storied Argolis,  
Where lost Mycenae stood  
In other age, but now in this  
Grown to a tangled wood,  
A poet strayed through leafy nave and aisle,  
And thought on life's vicissitudes the while.

Over the solemn hush and solitude  
The year's fresh-opening hand  
Had led the shining multitude  
Of flowers, while many a band  
Of joyous birds were carolling away  
In blithesome jargoning the happy day.

In one fair glade young spring in glee had set  
Her daintiest darlings down—  
Anenome and violet  
And daffodils, to crown  
A slope where slender harebells' trembling fears  
Made mournful music for the fairies' ears.

Hither the poet came. In his wide eyes  
Surprised delight doth shine.  
More lovely than his far surmise  
Is Flora's secret shrine.  
So lies him down among the blossoms gay  
To watch the feathered choir make holiday.

The interchanging play of light and shade,  
The gently whispering breeze,  
The slumbrous, booming anthem, made  
By legioned restless bees,  
All lured him down the pathway smooth and steep  
Into the quiet realms of grateful sleep.

In frolic mood a band of wandering fays,  
Chance-led along the dale,  
Came gliding down the golden rays  
That pierced the leafy veil.  
They spied the poet in his grassy nest,  
Where tranced he lay, enwrapped in visions blest.

With shrieks of sprightly joy and merriment  
Unheard of human ears,  
The swarming brood, on mischief bent,  
With laughing gibes and jeers,  
Invade his person lying hid from view,  
And search and probe his being through and  
through.

With immaterial fingers swift and bold  
They grope within his breast,  
And drag to light with glee untold  
His bosom's gentle guest,  
Filled to the brim with grief for human smart,  
That tender, mystic thing, the poet's heart.

Forthwith the boisterous rout by ruddy shame  
Were hushed to musings mild,  
For hovering round about them came  
Full many a lovely child  
Of Fancy, from the violated shrine  
Thus rudely entered without warning sign.

Dream faces, startled fancies deep,  
Their shrinking forms display,  
And shy and gentle thoughts that creep  
Back from the garish day,  
Scared by the hate and scorn to all things shown  
That dare to live for beauty's sake alone.

The thirst that drives the poet his life long  
To drink at beauty's well;  
The ear that hears the spirit song  
That never tongue may tell;  
The prophet eye, that sees the dawning light  
Expunge the errors of the spirit's night.

The spirit pitiful that sees the blind  
Mad welter in the gloom,  
That cries a warning to mankind,  
And shares Cassandra's doom.  
Whose eyes compassionate, since time began,  
Mourn the sad edict set on mortal man.

The spirit militant, that holds the truth  
Dearer than life or love;  
Whom neither hate nor serpent-tooth  
Of calumny may move;  
But steadfast still, whatever fate may send  
Unterrified dies fighting to the end.

And many more of gentle words and deeds,  
Unnumbered as the sands,  
The fays might see, and each one pleads  
With mutely folded hands  
That they might be restored to that dear breast  
Where neither hate nor fear nor scorn infect.

Ashamed, discomfited, the fairy band,  
Each seeking to atone  
For what his desecrating hand  
Had wrought against the lone  
And unprotected mortal lying there,  
Strove eagerly their mischief to repair.

And one brought heartsease for his spirit's balm,  
Another bringeth rue  
And poppies red, whose essence calm  
Doth peaceful sleep renew.

One doth anoint his head most daintily  
With oil distilled from gums of Araby;

Whose virtue was, thereafter he might hear  
The swaying bluebell ring;  
The plaintive words that through the year  
The nightingale doth sing;  
And know the meaning deep of every sound  
Of bird or beast, above or underground.

Another whispers in his sleeping ears  
Old tales from fairy lore,  
The hopes and fears, the smiles and tears  
Of lovers long of yore:  
And bids the poet as he farther strays  
To sing these songs of long forgotten days.

When every fairy wight had done his share,  
These spirits wild and free,  
Impalpable as crystal air,  
Fled where no man may see,  
And left the poet there—the legend tells—  
To be awakened by the floral bells.

## AFTER A LATE SNOW STORM

My heart is saddened by the voiceless crying  
Where prone along the ground  
The stricken forms of early flowers are lying  
In icy fetters bound.

O Springtime, else so tender and so loving,  
Why should thy changeful breath,  
A blight across the vernal landscape moving,  
Do these, thy babes, to death?

Demeter, whither were thy footsteps wending?  
Heard'st not thy children's cry  
When winter's squadrons, in a host unending,  
Swept from the northern sky?

Alone and helpless now the flowers are falling,  
Smit by the fatal blast;  
The spirit of the snow about them her appalling  
And chill embrace has cast.

Alas! within the alabaster masses  
We see each pallid face.  
The while its dying fragrance sweetly passes,  
Like prayer for final grace.

The earth, so prodigal, will bring fresh flowers  
To ease us of our pain;  
In sunny meadows and in lonely bowers  
The buds will swell again.

But to our saddened memory is clinging  
Thought of those faces wan,  
And sore regret our inmost heart is wringing  
For bloom untimely gone.

## IN THE TRACK OF A FOREST FIRE

Upon the bleak and drifting shore  
The low wind-tortured trees,  
Mishandled by the storms of yore,  
With gnarled and bulbous knees,  
Grotesque, fantastic, sprawl along the sand,  
(Withered and sere  
In the sunlight here,)  
Distorted, goblin keepers of a lonely barren strand.

Against a background desolate  
The dreary picture lies,  
Where sylvan hosts bewail their fate,  
Upraising to the skies  
Gaunt blackened arms that tell their sudden doom.  
(A holocaust  
By the demons tossed  
To sweep them all together to their crackling fiery  
tomb.)

Yet here, among these naked spires,  
Where death his wrath doth wield,  
Sweet Nature's force that never tires  
Has decked the stricken field  
With tangled labyrinth of bush and vine,  
(Bramble and brier  
Those sons of the fire),  
With eglantine and maiden hair and brake and  
columbine.

The high sun strikes out tender greens  
Along a gentle hill  
Sloping where purple iris leans  
Above a hidden rill  
That chuckles ceaselessly as on we pass,  
(With joyous note

In its reedy throat),  
And laughs in bubbling music as it ripples through  
the grass.

Blithe spring has sown both far and wide  
Her gems with lavish hand,  
Beneath the rustling herbage hide  
A shy and fragrant band  
Of pink arbutus denizens, replete  
(Through all the years  
Our dearest dears),  
With memories of joys that fled on pinions wild and  
fleet.

Yon swelling, golden, mossy knoll  
Thick dappled o'er with red  
Had been my dearest childish goal  
In years that long are dead:  
For there the prim and dapper wintergreen,  
(Filling the air  
With a perfume rare),  
Like dainty woodland belle arrayed in scarlet beads  
is seen.

And love dwells here. Among the bloom  
Where upstart aspens dance,  
Gay fawns, with eyes of liquid gloom,  
In youthful rapture prance,  
While in some shadowy nook the yearning doe,  
(O fawns, 'tis well  
She's the sentinel!),  
Alert and watchful, standing guard, protects from  
every foe.

A little soundless fluttering  
Within the fallen wood  
Reveals the pheasant hovering  
Her leaf-brown, fluffy brood.



They peer about, these mites of recent birth,  
(But at a sound  
Not a chick is found.)  
At all the strange unwonted things in this new-  
entered earth.

Thus love and life and beauty come  
Where desolation grim  
Upreads her banner. They who roam  
With eyes not blind and dim  
By reason of the selfish tears that flow,  
(Alas how few  
Have the vision true!)  
May see the hidden benison behind the clouds of  
woe.

## MY STAR

The night wind whispers its story,—  
My shallop seems to go  
In paths of astral glory  
Reduplicate below.

The sense of the great world resting  
Comes like a slumber-song  
To my weary soul, attesting  
How sweet is the night and strong.

Sweet to assuage our losses,  
Strong to relieve our pain;  
Sweet to make light our crosses,  
Strong to revive again.

In the shallop idly drifting  
Over the dim lake's breast,  
My spirit's voice uplifting  
Gives a desolate cry for rest.

When, lo! from the stellar spaces  
Cometh a star-crowned wraith.  
She hovers about me, and places  
Her hands on my brow, and saith,

“O mortal compounded of spirit  
Imprisoned in vestments of clay,  
Remember 'tis thine to inherit  
A part of the infinite day.

In the struggle unending that rages  
Twixt man and angel in thee,  
Forget not the terrible wages  
Of weaklings who falter and flee.

Thy spirit thou shalt strengthen  
By conquest of sorrow and fear,  
As the days of labor lengthen,  
And the time of reaping draws near.

And when the final evangel  
Shall visit thy mortal frame,  
Releasing thy sin-vexed angel,  
It shall rise like a living flame,

And soar to the empyrean  
A part of the light divine.  
Loud, loud shall be then thy paean.  
O mortal, what visions are thine!"

Then bending above me lowly,  
Sweet as the hope of heaven,  
Three kisses pure and holy  
Unto my lips were given.

The first hath brought life's sweetness—  
It came like a rushing song:  
The second in its completeness  
Hath heartened and made me strong.

But or ever the tale be given  
By my lips of the last of the three,  
May my dastard heart be riven  
And my soul in jeopardy:

For across the abysmal distance  
On some shimmering night afar,  
My spirit in wild insistence  
Shall pierce to that maiden star.

## THE PRIMAL STRAIN

I hold it true that every man  
Has deep within that breast of his  
A strain that reaches back to Pan,  
And stirs at woodland mysteries.

What though the mind be cultured-filled?  
The tiny drop of Satyr blood  
To riotous unrest is thrilled  
At call of that old pagan god.

The chance-heard whistle of the thrush,  
Odor of meadows after rain,  
Striking the senses mid the rush  
And turmoil of the strife for gain,

Will in a pulse-throb sweep away  
Stone walls that seem to touch the sky,  
And lead us where the breezes play,  
And deep alluring shadows lie.

Or where the loud-complaining brook  
Tumbles in riot down the glen,  
While shelving bank and foamy nook  
Conceal the speckled denizen.

As merry April leads along  
The bright procession of the hours,  
A homesick longing, fierce and strong,  
Tugs mightily, with growing powers,

Upon those cords that lead adown  
Into the red heart's central core,  
And waken primal instincts, sown  
Within the bosom long of yore.

Happy is he whose wistful eye  
May gaze once more on field and hill,  
And all the thousand charms descry  
That Nature's tiniest spaces fill.

For him red blood and thews of steel,  
And joy of life throughout the year,  
Pleasures that they alone can feel  
Who live to Nature's bosom near.

For when the final tale is told,  
It comes to this—man's strength, at best,  
And spirit free and uncontrolled,  
Find common source within her breast.

The men of brain, of bone and brawn,  
High thinkers they and men of worth,—  
The fruitage of the world's new dawn,  
Shall suckled be by Mother Earth.

## SPRING IDYL

Out in the sweet May morning,  
Yvette, the world adorning,  
And I, dull duty scorning,  
Haste where the red gods call.  
'Tis spring, when nothing single  
Can be where love-notes mingle  
But feels his blood a-tingle,  
And finds his heart in thrall.

Beneath the spreading birches  
Whereon the linnet perches  
And sings a song that searches  
And thrills us through and through,  
What bliss beyond comparing  
When, with a sudden daring,  
Spite of the linnet staring,  
Each to the other drew.

Our hearts a carol singing,  
Love glances flashing, winging,  
Aside all caution flinging,  
Our lips in kisses met.  
Ah, spite of years of sadness  
And toil, the piercing gladness,  
The ecstasy and madness  
That thrilled me, thrills me yet.

Then through enchanted spaces  
Where sylph-like floral faces  
Smile up in dainty graces,  
We wander hand in hand:  
Till in the tender gloaming,  
Our footsteps earthward roaming,  
We come, like ringdoves homing,  
Back from love's fairy land.

## ABSENCE

I sit where star-crowned Shelley smiles  
And rapturous Keats displays  
His sweetest, most alluring wiles  
Before my listless gaze.

The mighty minds of ages gone,  
Each one a flaming light  
To lead my spirit up and on,  
Unheeded are tonight.

Reproachfully they all look down,  
Giants of song and tale,  
And watch me sitting here alone,  
While Fancy's crew assail.

In order is the household all.  
In wonted place each thing,  
Yet down the stairway, past the tall  
Old clock, a whispering

Like filmy shadow of a sound  
Heard by the spirit's ear,  
Pervades the air and hovers round  
My lonely vigil here.

And footfalls light as fairy feet  
Along a rose-leaf way,  
When in their flowery revels meet  
Those dainty sprites and gay.

And scarce-heard rustlings seem to swing  
The stirring drapery,  
More faint than whir of linnet's wing  
Among the shrubbery.

A subtle presence through the room,  
Less palpable and dense  
Than far-blown sweets from unseen bloom,  
A sense within the sense,

Brings to my soul a nameless cheer,  
Until I seem to see  
Her spirit brooding o'er me here  
Who holds my heart in fee.



## SUNSET LIGHTS

Along the deepening vale of life,  
As sunset's shadows longer grow,  
Fair memories come tumultuous, rife  
With dreams and hopes of long ago.

And through the sombre darkness here  
Pierce sunny gleams from days gone by  
That lighten all the passage drear  
With youthful joys and triumphs high.

And so the downward sloping path  
Holds neither fear nor dread for me;  
Since life's most fragrant aftermath  
Grows sweeter as the seasons flee.

What though the head be bowed and gray,  
While winter's cold and summer's heat  
Have tamed the active limbs, yet may  
The heart to youthful measures beat.

The magic spell of field and wood,  
The sunset with its red and gold,  
The brooklet with its rushing flood,  
May charm as keenly as of old.

And when this throbbing heart forgets  
In swifter flight its blood to send  
At sight of April's violets,  
'Twill be the end, 'twill be the end.



## SONNETS



## KEATS

More sweet than Hyblan honey is thy song.  
Like clean-cut cameos thy pictures stand.  
Be sure the Muse with her own plastic hand  
Attuned thy lyre, and by her spirit strong  
Thine own was led beyond the common throng,  
Along Arcadian vales, to that fair land  
Where visions dwell, and there at her command  
The speech of gods was given to thy tongue.  
What Nymphs and Dryads overran thy dream!  
What ecstasy of longing hast thou known!  
Along what rose-embowered Latmian stream  
Were dulcet-bosomed Naiads to thee shown  
As, straying 'neath thy Cynthia's witching beam,  
She stooped from heaven and took thee for her  
    own?

## SHELLEY

Thou fiery spirit of the upper air,  
Like thine own skylark pulsing loud in song,  
Stern fighter for the weak against the strong,  
Our earthly praise were least of all thy care.  
Intrepid spirit that would keenly dare  
On wings of morning soar the worlds among,  
With that sidereal host dost thou belong  
About Orion and the northern Bear.  
Clear beauty and the spirit's life are thine.  
Crowned art thou evermore with diadem  
Of lambent flame, whose jeweled lightnings shine  
Across the years oblivion to condemn.  
The whole world in thy music dost entwine,  
Each word a song and every song a gem.

## MILTON

As some tremendous Himalayan peak  
At sunset throws its splendor o'er the world,  
Thy lone and austere genius towers impearled  
By light of time which gilds the summit bleak.  
Our trembling mortal spirits, frail and weak,  
Shrink back from pitchy blackness tossed and  
swirled

In that vast cauldron down to which were hurled  
Archangels bright who dared God's power to seek.  
Yet far below thy mighty genius' crest,  
Amid the bright beginnings of thy song,  
Lie sunny vales where Nymphs and Naiads blest  
On twinkling feet dance gaily all day long.  
And one loved spot, where Lycid lies at rest,  
Is still a shrine to which the poets throng.

R. L. S.

Thou gentle gossip of things divine,  
Thou white-souled lover of the sunny world,  
Though flayed by weakness, thy brave spirit hurled  
Thy soul into life's active battle line.  
Unsullied honor and clear manhood shine  
From all thy pages, every page impearled  
With jewelled thought. Close in our hearts up-  
furling,  
Thy memory hath there its perfect shrine.  
By what sweet alchemy hast thou so wrought  
That each unlovely thing thy presence flees?  
What sage or god thy kindly spirit taught  
To lead us into those far southern seas  
Where thine impressionable soul had caught  
The haunting songs of the Hesperides?



## LINCOLN

Thou monument of every good that lies  
Among the common people of the land,  
Secure is thy great fame. Thou still dost stand  
Colossal among giants. To our eyes  
Thy rugged features, like the bright sunrise,  
Are all aglow with light serene and grand  
Which has its source in thy true heart's demand  
For mercy blent with firmness just and wise.  
Nor do the mists of passing decades hide  
Thy glory, which yet shineth clear and bright  
From chaos of thy times, and doth abide  
Like some high mountain hidden from our sight  
When near at hand, but towering magnified  
By distance to its lonely mystic height.

## A SEQUENCE OF FOUR SONNETS

Demeter, great earth-mother, take thou me,  
Thy foster child outworn with toil and pain.  
Within thy soothing arms the fretful chain  
Of custom falls, and leaves my spirit free  
To worship and to take its joy in thee,  
Far, far removed from life's mad hurricane  
And vortex of contention, where in vain  
I strive thy faithful servitor to be.  
Thus pillowed on thy bosom let me hear  
The grasses rustling round me as I lie,  
And all the woodland blossoms that uprear  
Their dainty heads, and gossip knowingly  
Of things too deep for my dull mortal ear,  
Of death and life and their dim mystery.

### II

Great mother, take me to thine inmost heart.  
Teach me the secret language of the flowers,  
And what they say throughout the sunny hours.  
Tell the sweet means by which thou dost impart  
Its odor to the rose, and bid it start  
In pulsing new, what time the winter cowers  
And flees before the all-compelling powers  
Of great Apollo with his golden dart.  
Tell me the secret of the violet's blue,  
The hawthorn's white, the pink carnation's blush:  
How doth the budding foliage renew  
Its tender green along the swaying bush?  
What signal dost thou give the iris crew  
To decorate the shore with verdure lush?

### III

O mighty mother, stern and yet so mild,  
Show how the sap distils along the trees  
Until the smallest twigs of each of these  
Are thrilled with spring-time joy and gladness wild,  
And, like thy lowliest hidden grassy child,  
Put forth brave show of vernal greeneries:  
And fluttering their new mantles to the breeze,  
Murmur in innocence all undefiled.  
What may the purport of their whisperings be?  
Do they the mystery of life disclose,  
And what comes after death, when suddenly  
The vital spark that through our being glows  
Expires, and with fast glazing eyes we see  
The light that from Elysium overflows?

### IV

Alas! the secret still is hidden deep.  
In heedless babble talk the nodding leaves:  
Yet my soothed spirit now but faintly grieves,  
Drawn Letheward by dreamy restful sleep.  
The frolic winds along the hillside sweep  
And make irate the buzzing honey thieves  
Whose gauzy wings, when boisterous Zephyr heaves,  
Are all too frail their wonted poise to keep.  
My soul is led the slumbrous vales along  
By leafy lullabies, and murmurous tune  
Of buried runnels, and the cradle-song  
Of vagrant bees who hum a sleepy rune.  
Demeter, mother, fruitful young and strong,  
Thou bringest rest, thy tired children's boon.

## PROSERPINE

Six times the moon hath changed, O Proserpine,  
Since last thy presence cheered this world of ours.  
But with awakened life of leaves and flowers,  
And flow of sap along the tree and vine,  
Thou comest with thy quickening smile divine,  
Abandoning the gloomy Stygian bowers  
Where thou must spend the dreary winter hours,  
And now thy breath intoxicates like wine!  
Thy velvet footfalls fill the earth with bloom:  
Joy bringest thou to hearts that need it sore:  
Thou banishest the weariness and gloom  
That dull gray skies into our spirits bore,  
And standest beckoning beyond the tomb,—  
The symbol clear of life forevermore.

## TO FANNY

Dear gracious lady with the diadem  
Of silver tresses round thy queenly head,  
Through all the pleasant seasons that have fled  
Since to my keeping came the priceless gem  
Of thy pure friendship, which doth ever hem  
My life with sweet observance, and hath led  
To knowledge of thy virtues,—garlanded  
Forget-me-nots enshrine both thee and them.  
Whatever envious time may bring to me,  
Within my heart shall be no trace of fear,  
So that thou keep me in thy memory  
And thy blithe spirit float forever near;  
Even though thine earthly presence may not be  
Perceived by these mine eyes that hold thee dear.

## TO A CROCUS

Thou pert and daring flower that pushest through  
The lingering snow to show thy winsome face,  
Thou sweet forerunner of the dainty grace  
Of spring, when blossoms full of sun and dew  
And perfume come, thy cheerful smiles renew  
The summer in my heart, and drive all trace  
Of stormy winter back to that dim place  
Where half-forgotten memories lie perdu.  
The mystic charm that the reviving year  
Brings to our hearts, within thy chalice lies.  
Thy velvet lips unto the spirit's ear  
Whisper of stirring life that soon shall rise  
From the new-kindled earth, and lead anear  
Long vanished joys to reminiscent eyes.

## IN NOVEMBER

O'er all the face of torpid nature lies  
An elemental desolation vast,  
That speaks of life which from the earth has passed,  
And left its dull dead husk to film our eyes.  
But hope, to still the spirit's mournful cries,  
Bids each his vision on the future cast,  
(Beyond the time of wintry storm and blast,)      .  
When life triumphant over death shall rise.  
Since thus the fecund womb of mother earth  
May keep immortal even grass and flowers,  
How must the demons, in discordant mirth,  
Mock at our tremblings when death's shadow low-  
ers;  
And howl and dance in glee to see the dearth  
Of faith and knowledge in these hearts of ours.

## UNREST

I know not by what sweetest alchemy  
This grizzled, time-worn, weary heart of mine  
Beats with a youthful zest and joy divine,  
What time the powers of darkness have set free  
The goddess of the spring, Persephone.  
Her breath, like incense from some hidden shrine  
Doth permeate my being, and incline  
To dreams of happiness that may not be.  
What strange unrest doth agitate my soul  
With longings that I do not understand?  
Doth my immortal spirit seek control  
Of its own destiny, and make demand  
For freedom from that sadness, ages old,  
Which rings humanity on every hand?











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